

FOCUS ON:

the forty committee

BY L. FLETCHER PROUTY

"By God, Prouty, those bastards are going to let them murder Trujillo. They go around telling everyone this shit about anticommunism; invading Cuba with a half-assed task force and then when they have one tough son-of-a-bitch right there in the heart of the Caribbean, what do they do? They take away his support. He'll be dead in less than forty-eight hours."

General Darcy was spitting mad. He was one of the toughest guys who ever strapped himself into a P-51 fighter. He was a real professional. He believed in fighting the Cold War as hard as he had fought the total war against Hitler. Now, in May 1961, less than one month after the Bay of Pigs, he had just come back from a meeting of the Forty Committee (then called the Special Group 5412/2). They were playing God again and Rafael Trujillo, the dictatorial president of the Dominican Republic, was the next target for termination.

"Prouty, before you go back to your shop, go down to personnel. Find out what it takes to retire. This is not my game. I'm getting out." Before Darcy's papers could be processed, Trujillo was dead, murdered in the city that carried his name, by men of his own army.

Tom Darcy had made it clear many times that he had no love for Trujillo nor for what he stood; but despite that he knew Trujillo would never condone communism, and anyway, "it is not our business to mess around in their internal affairs."

Assassinations are not *made* by the Forty Committee; they are *permitted*. When the South Vietnamese military found out that the U.S. was withdrawing its support from the Diem brothers in Saigon, there was but one thing for the Diems to do. Take that preferred plane ride and leave—quickly. Trujillo was too

proud to heed the warning, and he was shot down in the streets. The Diems were too stubborn. They returned to their palace to find that their CIA-trained elite guard—their only real personal protection—had vanished. They were defenseless, dead.

Many of the telegrams that tell this story are contained in the "Pentagon Papers." Anyone can see how this country removed its support from the Diems' government and all but engineered their murders. An interesting sidelight to this came up in the Watergate testimony: Charles Colson ordered E. Howard Hunt to doctor up the State Department cables pertaining to the Diem murders in

actions. Eisenhower, Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Nixon were all caught in this web.

When President Salvador Allende's opposition in Chile learned that the United States had withdrawn all support of his government, they knew it was time to move. The Forty Committee did not have to say, "We have decided to kill Allende." All it had to do was to let the right people know that they would not support him and that they would not censure these people. Allende should have recognized the pattern; not long before he had witnessed the same thing in Bolivia.

President Victor Paz Estensoro lost

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order to make it appear that President John Kennedy had ordered that act. Look at this from another perspective. Colson, Hunt, and others knew that Kennedy had not ordered those murders. They wanted it to look as though he did. If Kennedy did not order that action, someone of lesser authority did. Was it the Forty Committee? If not the committee, was it the CIA acting alone? Without belaboring this crucial point here, this is what it is all about. Who has this tremendous power? Who uses this great power—with or without presidential consent, let alone without the consent of congress? The record is full of these

favor with Washington. The CIA tipped off General Rene Barrientos Ortuno that the gates of the city were open. In an almost effortless coup d'etat, Barrientos and his CIA friends flew into La Paz and the country was theirs. Estensoro accepted transport out of Bolivia and flew to exile in Lima, Peru. The committee does not kill anyone, they just welcome in the new regime and fling out the old—dead or alive.

What is this Forty Committee, which has this power over the noncommunist world? Who are its members? Do they operate within any law? Whom do they (continued on page 105)

cause the law requires that the President have a National Security Advisor. By his very duties this advisor performs functions that are in direct conflict with those of the Secretary of State.

The power of this committee is awesome. Like the Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, there is almost nothing in the world that cannot be done secretly by the might and money of the government of the United States. Consider some of the actions of this committee, or at least things that the CIA has done under the guise of having the committee's support.

Years ago the CIA had an old-time oil expert named George Prussing who knew the Middle East and its power centers like the back of his sunburned hands. In those days many of the Arab countries were weak and the Russian bear loomed large over the Caucasus. Prussing was directed by the CIA via the Special Group to plant mines in the oil wells of such countries as Saudi Arabia against the day when the Russian might overrun those defenseless oil fields. Did he do it? Are they still there? Are they effective? Who knows? But most of all, who reviews these matters? Who knows about such horrendous things? And if these five men know or knew, then from whom do they, or did they, draw their supreme power? Did Eisenhower know about Prussing's assignment? Did he authorize it? He didn't know about Francis Gary Powers's U-2 flight. In 1958, when the Special Group authorized the CIA to invade Indonesia and to support more than forty thousand scattered rebels against the legitimate government of Sukarno, who really gave them that power? Was it really in the best interest of the U.S. for the CIA to mount such a large operation against a "friendly" country? Either the CIA acted on its own or with the approval of the Special Group mechanism. Richard Nixon, as Vice President, knew all about this. He knew that Allen Dulles's protege, Frank Wisner of the CIA, was in Singapore directing this operation. After its failure Nixon ordered Dulles to fire Wisner. But did Eisenhower know of this?

When the CIA was created, soon after World War II, the law (the National Security Act of 1947) stated clearly what its duties were to be. There are five. The first four are clearly above-board intelligence functions. It is the fifth duty that opens the door to clandestine operations:

"5) 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."

This is the exact language of the law. This is the law today, and despite countless efforts by the CIA to have us believe otherwise, this is the only law that properly lists the duties of the CIA. It has not been changed and it has not been

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represent and whose interests do they promote?

The Forty Committee is the latest of a long line of such committees, all of which live in deepest secrecy. Before it was called the Forty Committee it was the 303 Committee. Before that the Special Group. In the early Fifties it was the Special Group 10/2 and later the Special Group 5412 or 5412/2. Ostensibly this organization has always been made up of a representative of the President (the President's Advisor for National Security Affairs—a euphemism for the CIA's man in the White House); a representative of the Secretary of State and one for the Secretary of Defense. It also includes the Director of the CIA and since Kennedy's time it has included the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. These five men, representing as they do the principals of the National Security Council, have had thrust upon them the responsibility for international clandestine operations.

At one time Nelson Rockefeller was the President's National Security Advisor. So were Robert Cutler, McGeorge Bundy, and Maxwell Taylor. The present incumbent is Henry Kissinger, because he did not relinquish that CIA-oriented job when he became Secretary of State. This is no doubt an unauthorized and perhaps illegal use of this position be-

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augmented.

The CIA would like to have us believe that it has the right to perform clandestine activities. It does not have this authority in law—unless it is directed by the National Security Council to perform such an activity. Even then the law is most explicit: it adds, “from time to time. . . .” As when the CIA is authorized to perform a clandestine operation, that authority does not carry over to another.

The law further limits the CIA by saying “As the National Security Council may . . . direct.” In such important matters there is a vast difference between “direct” and “authorize.” When the NSC *directs*, that means that the highest authority in the country has originated the idea, approved it and resolved to carry it out. When the NSC believes that the plan must be carried out, and only then, the NSC *directs* that it be done. And the NSC has the authority to direct any agency, not just the CIA.

After Allen Dulles had been appointed Director of the CIA by President Eisenhower, he began a deft campaign to water down this prescribed process. Working in conjunction with his brother John Foster Dulles, who was then Secretary of State, Allen Dulles put his proposal in the following terms: because the members of the NSC are the busiest people in Washington, because they have the cares of the world on their shoulders, because the President or the Vice President cannot be at every meeting, it is proposed that representatives be appointed to a sub-committee of the NSC which can meet regularly in place of each member to act upon CIA clandestine matters.

This sounded logical from an administrative point of view. But was it legal? Congress and federal law already said how this should be done. Congress knew that the NSC would be busy. They also knew that those top men would be most responsible and ultimately discreet. So Congress did not provide for a subcommittee. But it was done.

The CIA had prevailed upon the NSC to publish a series of National Security Council Intelligence Directives (NSCIDs). One of these, NSCID 10/2, came close to giving the CIA what it wanted. In that document the NSC had spelled out that the CIA could get into clandestine work. However (and I used to have one of the original drafts of this directive in my files in the Office of the Secretary of Defense), President Eisenhower had written in his own handwriting on the side margin of NSCID/10/2 a stipulation to the effect that neither the military nor any other branch of the government was to provide the CIA with men, money, materials, or

overseas base facilities in such quantity that the agency would have the ability to carry out a series of operations, a large operation, or a long-term operation. Eisenhower knew that if he cut off its men, money, and supplies, the CIA could not get deeply involved. The full meaning of this interpretation cannot be overemphasized. Yet the CIA eventually got around this device. Even the written directives of Presidents are ignored.

For years Eisenhower's stipulation slowed Dulles down. But through a procedure found in the complexities of the national war planning process, of which the CIA's a part, he was able to find another loophole and to build up supplies as though they were part of his “Fourth Force” augmentation during wartime. The military fell for this and gave him more war materiel than he could ever use, even in peacetime. Then the CIA penetrated the military with cover units. At one time more than one thousand military units of varying strengths belonged to the CIA. Even though they were not large, they permitted men and materiel to flow anywhere—and at no cost to the CIA.

Then Allen Dulles got the Special Group established and it became the platform for the development of a capability for clandestine operations. With meticulous care Dulles saw to it that the men designated as representatives of the White House and of the State and Defense Departments were men with strong connections with the CIA. At one time General Edward G. Lansdale attended meetings for the Secretary of Defense. Lansdale had served with the CIA for most of his active “military” career.

By 1955, when I began my daily work within this secret framework, the Special Group was regularly approving items brought to it by the CIA. Very rarely, if ever, did the NSC “direct” the CIA to get itself involved in some activity. Rather the CIA, as Dulles has visualized, found itself creating and originating exercises one after the other, with the Special Group rubber-stamping them. In those days, when the CIA made a request of the Department of Defense, we would screen top-secret Special Group logs. If we found that the Defense Department representative had “voted” to approve the “fun and games,” we would provide the men, materiel, and overseas resources through an elaborate “cover” process that was global in its capability.

On the other hand, when we found that the operation had not been presented to the Special Group, we would notify the Secretary of Defense immediately and await his instructions. Between 1955 and 1959 we had the power to stop CIA requests that had not been approved by the Defense Department. Sometimes the CIA would attempt to get around us and tie one operation to another or otherwise attempt to beat the system. We learned

to put knowledgeable experts in the field—pilots, doctors, and so on—who would detect their plans and report them immediately. Once, when I was asked to move a squadron of Marine helicopters from the Laos CIA operational zone to South Vietnam, I found no precedent and no approval. I informed the Secretary of Defense of this item and he did not approve the project. At that time it would have been the first such move of major "hardware" into South Vietnam. The CIA battled this decision for weeks and finally prevailed, as they usually did, by using the weight of the Special Group and the White House.

Since those days the Special Group or Forty Committee has become a power unto itself. The State Department has thousands of career people who are responsible for the Foreign Policy of the United States to the Forty Committee's five men. They approve items that have much greater impact on world events than the State Department. They do this secretly, without proper review, without comprehensive experience and often without anyone but a very few "spooks" knowing about it.

Technically the CIA does not have this authority, and legally this is not the way things should be done. The CIA was never given this power by law and should not be permitted to continue this practice. No new laws are needed; the present law should be followed precisely and enforced. The CIA is in existence to perform an intelligence function and no more.

It would not take much to conclude that the Forty Committee possesses sufficient leverage over international affairs to overthrow Allende. To give money to the opposition party in Italy? To train King Hussein's elite bodyguard? To create and build up the Shah of Iran? To grant soft drink bottling concessions to Marshall Sarit of Thailand in order to make him the most powerful and wealthy man of that CIA-pawn country? To create Willy Brandt in West Germany and then to knock him down when it wished? To overfly Chinese nuclear plants at will? To arm and equip Indian Border Police? To infringe on the air rights of Norway? To bolster the Katangese rebel government of the Congo while the State Department was working with the legal government? To overthrow Paz Estensoro? To spy in Antarctica despite an international treaty prohibiting it? To play dirty "dirty tricks" at several Olympic Games until the Games now have become political battle-grounds? To spy with U-2's on the French and British at the Suez in 1956? To place so many CIA personnel in other branches and agencies of the American government that the CIA is internally powerful in almost every agency? If the Forty Committee did not authorize these things, then is the answer that the CIA did them on its own, illegally?

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When Gary Powèrs's U-2 spy plane went down in the Soviet Union in 1960, President Eisenhower did not know about it until after he heard the news from Khrushchev. Rather than admit that a tiny irresponsible cabal had sent the U-2 out, Eisenhower had to say that he knew about it. After the Bay of Pigs, when John Kennedy learned about the CIA's role, he wrote three strong orders intended to control the CIA. But he did not live to complete that task. Lyndon Johnson admitted that the CIA ran a "damned Murder Inc." but confessed that he had been unable to do anything about it.

The combination of the Forty Committee and the CIA has outlived any usefulness that it may once have had. It must be abolished and the CIA must be so controlled by Congress and the Executive that it will be removed from the business of clandestine operations together. After all, there are other ways to do these things. We'll discuss them at a later date. 

...to recommend pleasant Spanish wines that are not too expensive. Complete luncheons average from \$4.50 to (continued on page 110)