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It's time to abolish the CIA

By Bruce Fein

December 31, 2014

After a trial run of 67 years, the agency has proven a sorcerer's apprentice. The director and his subordinates have become insufferably arrogant Platonic Guardians hiding behind secrecy in the belief that the rest of us are too stupid or naive to judge what risks to accept to preserve liberty and the rule of law. The CIA has made Americans less safe.

Its incorrigible anti-democratic ethos was epitomized by legendary chief of counterintelligence James J. Angleton. He voiced contempt for the Church Committee's investigation of chronic agency abuses, i.e., the "Family Jewels." As reported in The New York Times, Angleton likened the CIA to a medieval city occupied by an invading army, i.e., the Congress of the United States. To the same effect, Director William J. Casey told Church Committee investigator Loch K. Johnson that the congressional role was to "stay the [expletive] out of my business."

The CIA will never accept that it works for we the people and our representatives in Congress; and, that the United States Constitution and laws govern everything the CIA does. It will never accept accountability for its actions — including torture, kidnappings, and extrajudicial killings—because it salutes the motto that the ends justify the means, that savagery is justified to defeat perceived savages.

The CIA is unAmerican. It sneers at our nation's signature creed that it is better to risk being the victim of injustice than to be complicit in it.

President Harry Truman, father of the CIA in 1947, came to regret his offspring. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, former New York Democrat and former vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, introduced legislation in 1991 and 1995 to abolish the agency. Their views were not misplaced.

Aside from its scorn for the law and government by the consent of the governed, the CIA has proven detrimental to the national security through its actions and intelligence failures.

In 1953, the agency orchestrated the overthrow of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq, the only democratically elected leader in the history of the Middle East. It replaced Mossadeq with the corrupt, narcissistic, and megalomaniacal Shah of Iran. The CIA then accepted an agreement with the Shah's brutal intelligence service, SAVAK, to refrain from contacting opposition leaders and to rely on SAVAK instead for intelligence about the Shah's political standing.

The agency predictably missed the 1979 Iranian Revolution that ousted the Shah and ushered in Ayatollah Khomeini. The United States now confronts a state sponsor of terrorism in Iran with nuclear ambitions because of the CIA's overthrow folly precipitated by its delusion that Mossadeq was a dupe of the Soviet Union.

In 1954, the agency toppled the Socialist government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala. It paved the way for more than three decades of genocidal killings by military dictators targeting the indigenous population. Guatemala became a failed state, and is now complicit in industrial scale illegal immigration and drug trafficking.

In 1958, the CIA attempted the overthrow of Indonesia's George Washington, Sukarno. The CIA-inspired revolt was a full-scale military operation involving 42,000 CIA-armed rebels. It failed. In 1965, the agency supported a successful uprising by the ruthless and corrupt Suharto featuring the assassination of one million. Its grisliness is captured in the movie, "The Act of Killing."

The 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba to overthrow Fidel Castro proved another monumental CIA blunder. Along with multiple attempted assassinations of the Cuban leader, the Bay of Pigs contributed to the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis which brought the world to the edge of destruction.

The agency was implicated in the overthrow and murder of South Vietnam's Ngo Dinh Diem and Chile's Salvador Allende in favor of the murderous Augusto Pinochet. It was complicit in the arms-for-hostages deal with Iran.

The CIA missed the fall of the Berlin Wall, glasnost and perestroika under Mikhail Gorbachev, the disintegration of the Soviet Empire, India's nuclear testing in 1998, and the predictable metamorphosis of the Afghan mujahideen into the perpetrators of 9/11.

It errantly concluded Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction, which occasioned the disastrous war in Iraq that persists today. Iran is now the regional hegemony courtesy of the CIA.