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III. Operations and Policy

Clandestine activities should be assessed not only in the context of their relationship to an open society but also in the context of their relationship to United States foreign policy.

CIA operations have not been held effectively subordinate to U.S. foreign policy.

1. Clandestine intelligence collection is, by charter, free from State Department control. This fact exposes American foreign policy to a multitude of embarrassments when CIA is discovered recruiting agents or developing sources in a friendly country. The recent Singapore case, when CIA, without notice to the Consul General, tried to subvert a member of the Special Branch of the Singapore Police provides an instructive example. After complications of ludicrous complexity, including an attempt to subject the recruit to a lie-detector test, it turned out that the recruit had long since informed his superiors of the CIA approach and was leading CIA into a trap which, when sprung, produced considerable embarrassment to relations between the US and the Singapore government. There have been troubles of a comparable sort [redacted]

[redacted] JFK Act 6 (1)(B)
[redacted] JFK Act 6 (1)(C)

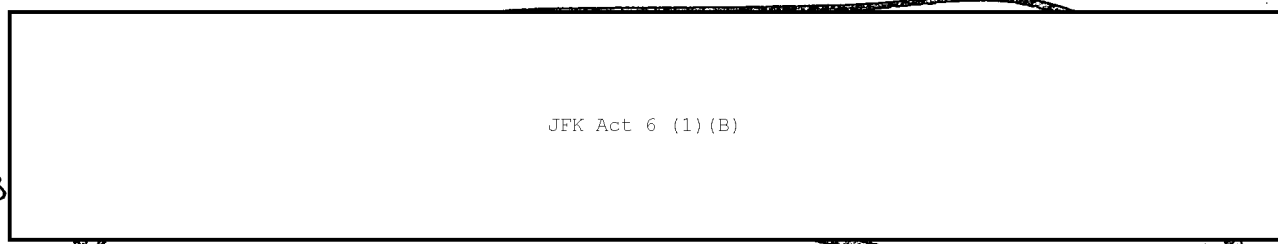
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4 NOV 83

CIA has said that, in such cases, neither the Embassy nor the Department in Washington is normally informed of this type of operation. In short, no one knows how many potential problems for US foreign policy -- and how much potential friction with friendly states -- are being created at this moment by CIA clandestine intelligence operation. Surely there is an argument for permitting States to decide whether the advantage to be gained by the operation (e.g., the information derivable from an agent within the Special Branch of the Singapore Police) outweighs the risk (e.g., exasperating the local government and shaking its confidence both in our purposes and in our sense). Clandestine intelligence operations should plainly be cleared both with the Department of State and (save for exceptional instances and an agreement of the Secretary of State) with the local U.S. Ambassador.

It has meant too that the State Department, often apprized of an operation only in its later stages, is under great pressure to endorse the operation as already mounted because of the alleged evil consequences of exercising a veto. I well remember Tom Mann's remark the day the decision was made to go ahead on Cuba: "I would never have favored initiating this operation; but, since it has gone as far as it has, I do not think we can rich calling it off." Moreover, at a time when there is increasing premium on activism, State, when it questions CIA operations or initiatives, casts itself in a prissy,issy, negative role. The advocate of clandestine activities seems 'tough' and realistic; the opponent has to invoke such intangibles as the reputation of the United States, world public opinion, "What do we say in the United Nations?", etc., and seems hopelessly idealistic, legalistic and 'soft.'

The result of CIA's initiative in covert political operations has been to create situations which have forced policy on the State Department. This was not the original idea behind CIA. As Allen Dulles wrote in his 1947 memorandum to the Senate Armed Services Committee, "The Central Intelligence Agency should have nothing to do with policy." Yet, in the years since, CIA has, in effect, 'made' policy in many parts of the world. A number of governments still in power know that they have even been targets of CIA attempts at overthrow -- not a state of mind calculated to stimulate friendly feelings toward the United States. Indonesia, of course, is a prime example.

This experience suggests that the present system by which CIA notifies State of a projected covert operation is inadequate to protect US interests. There must be some means by which State can be informed of such operations at an early enough stage to affect the conception and preliminary planning of the operation. Otherwise CIA will continue to confront State with propositions having potential impact on foreign policy but at too late a point to subject that impact to reasonable control.



JFK Act 6 (1)(B)

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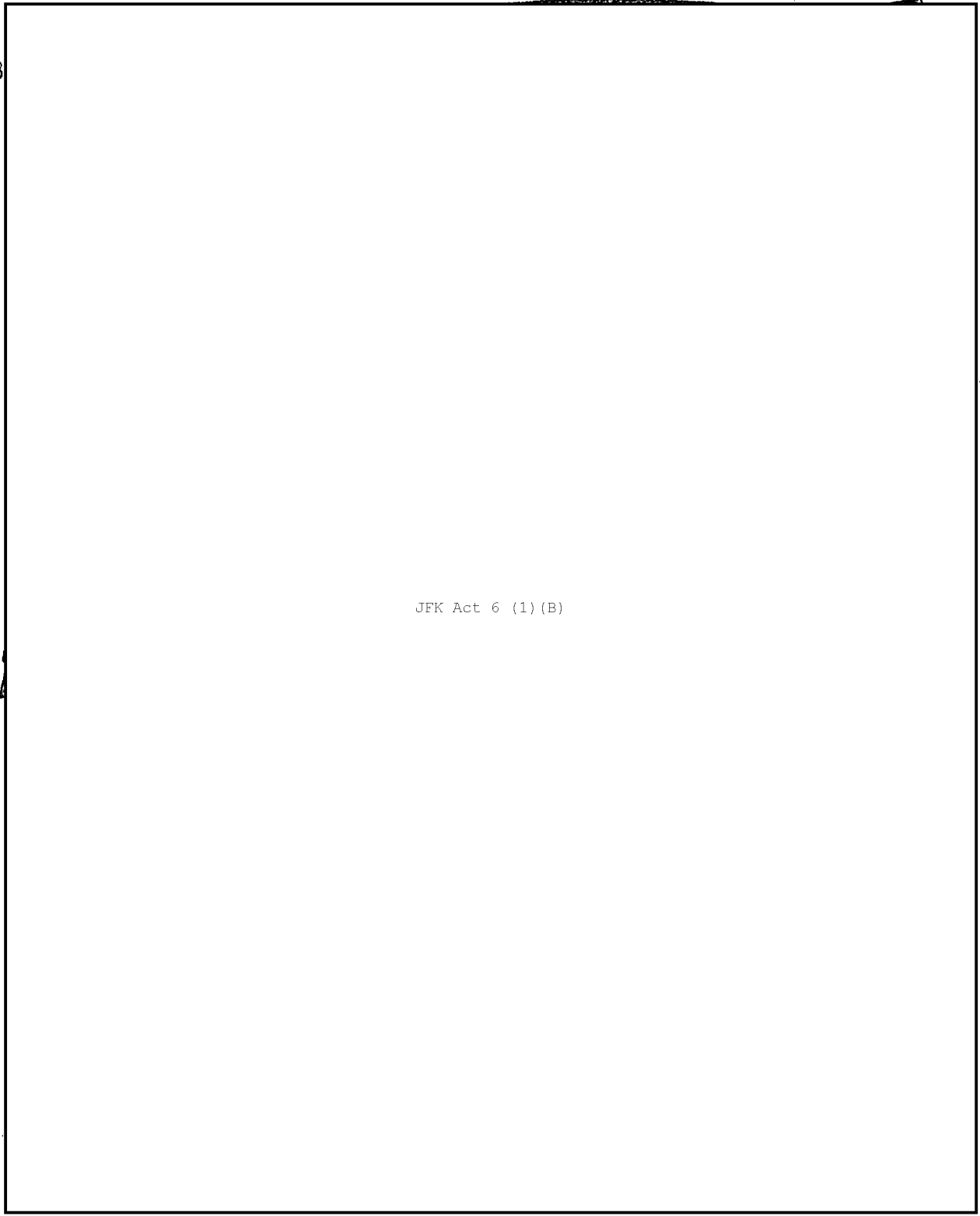
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EQ 12356, Sec. 1.3 (a) (1) (e)

JFK ACT

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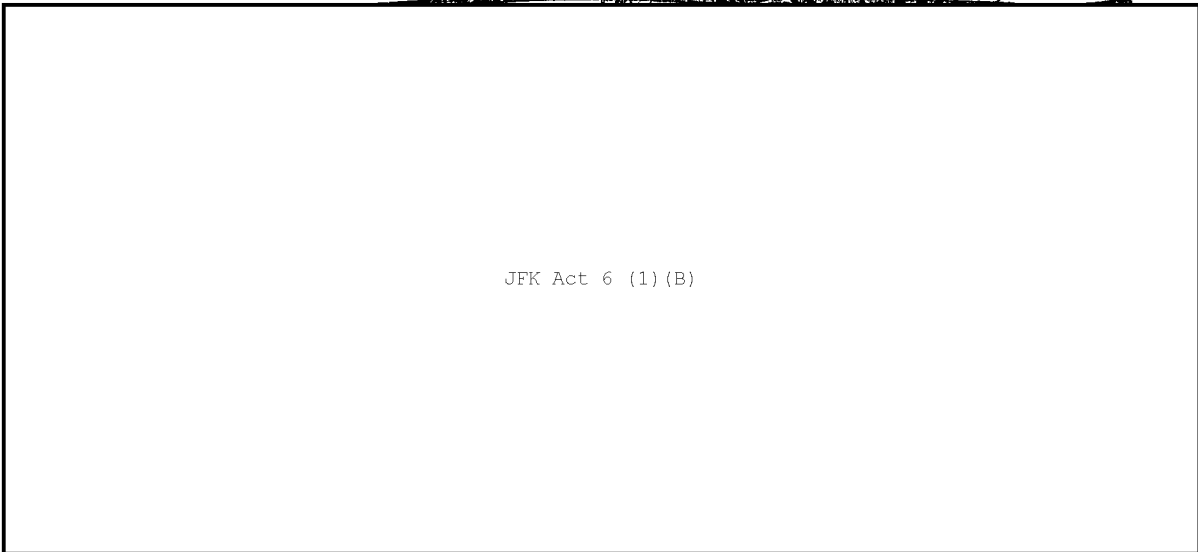
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EO 12356, Sec. 1.5

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(1) (B)
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JFK Act 6 (1) (B)

4. Paramilitary warfare, I gather, is regarded in some quarters as a purely technical matter, easily detachable from policy and therefore a proper function of the Department of Defense. Yet there is almost no CIA function more peculiarly dependant on the political context than paramilitary warfare.

There are several reasons for this. For one thing, a paramilitary operation is in its nature a large and attributable operation and thereby, as suggested above, clashes with the presuppositions of our open society. (These considerations need not apply, however, to the training of, say, the South Vietnamese in guerrilla tactics or to the support of already existing guerrilla activities.) For another, the moral and political price of direct paramilitary failure is acute for us. Communists, when they stimulate paramilitary activity, are doing what the world expects from them: when we do it, we appear to betray our own professed principles and therefore cannot afford to compound delinquency by defeat. Moreover, as the recent Algerian episode showed, once we convince the world that we are committed to a paramilitary endeavor, we will be blamed for all sorts of things. And, as the recent tractors-for-prisoners episode showed, when we do send men to possible death, we cannot lightly write them off and close the books. The Communists, on the other hand, have no scruples about liquidating a losing show.