

Tracing us intelligence from 1936 to 1945 essay



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Intelligence serves a very important role as far as a country security is concerned.

This applies to both internal and external security of a given nation. In America vital intelligence reports have been used to deal with certain situations which were a threat to the national security. Intelligence gathering has been part and parcel of every government in this country with each period presenting development of this important part of national activities. Between 1939 and 1945 America and the world was going through a war that changed the course of world politics.

Intelligence served a very crucial part of the warfare as it provided the much needed information for the government in the course of making important decision. President Roosevelt just like his counterparts in the past used the intelligence information to make decisions as the Commander in Chief of the armed forces. Many of the performances and events of the United States intelligence were mostly due to the executive orders as well as the thoughts of people who were concerned in making important decision in the government. The entire government agencies during this period were dedicated in providing accurate and timely information to the relevant bodies. The information was used to make the necessary steps as far as the warfare was concerned as well as maintaining internal security.

This period saw the reinstatement of the domestic intelligence where they were expanded and institutionalized in a bid to make them responsive to the needs of the nation. This action was based on the government aim to deal with subversive activities which were seen as real threat to the national

security. This led to the Federal Investigation Bureau to be mandated to carry out a broad intelligence program which would see the groups and individuals suspected of such activities investigated.

The military was also involved in the investigations of civilians in an attempt to address the underlying issues. (Andrew, C1996)The Federal Bureau of investigation mandate was more than investigations of crime but also included the authority to investigate the involvement of foreigner's involvement in our countries affairs. Through exercising this mandate the agency started to investigate the local groups which were law abiding, this did not spare individuals either, this program was very open to misuse especially for political purposes, many used it to settle scores making it clash with the interests of the public. The techniques employed by this agencies in the quest for information gathering were very intrusive and in most cases they were challenged by the public as they were not only based on the questionable statuses or basically lacked formal authorization by the law.

In the entire period the executive kept away from activities on intelligence away from the congress. This continued until 1939 when the congress appeared to have deliberately refused to face the issue of intelligence gathering. The federal Bureau of investigation was forced to comply with the Attorney general as far as its activities of intelligence gathering were concerned. The agencies did not welcome the move by the Justice department to have its activities reviewed.

These developments opened the doors for further scrutiny of the Intelligence agencies in United States. Though their activities were well intended, the

public was not at all occasions comfortable with some of their activities especially those which were considered intrusive. It was ruled out that the executive order that the intelligence agencies were using to gather some of their information were not only vague but also conflicting. Use of words such as subversion which was never clearly defined was not in line with the statues prevailing in the American constitution then. The foundation was exercising its duties through use of excessive methods of information gathering. According to Edgar Hoover the original orders issued by President Roosevelt on the investigation of the Nazi movement in America made the FBI to conduct a one time investigation . This investigation concentrated on the Nazi group with special emphasize on the anti America and anti racial activities which might have had any connection with the Nazi government in Germany. (Andrew, C1996)Two years after Roosevelt issued the executive orders on the investigation of the Nazi movements in Untied States of America, he went further to ask for more investigation on activities which were described as subversive in the country.

This was one particular order that was considered to be controversial as it was misused by the authorities to set scores with those organizations and people who were deemed as a threat to the national security in the country. This caused uproar as it was violating on the rights of American citizens as guaranteed in the constitution. Later the president came to recede on the order where he issued another order which had no mention of the issues that were perceived by the public as retrogressive. He urged all the investigative arms of the government both in the justice department and military to work as a team in order to achieve their objectives at a crucial time of the

American intelligence history. The orders issued by the president continued to cause confusion especially on which organ was mandated to carry out certain activities, this confusion continued even as the war continued in Europe. The Attorney general had to step in to make the matters clear. The confusion that characterized the intelligence system in the country was described by the British DNI as a shameful situation which gave the country a bad name.

Though the Briton found the intelligence system in United States wanting this situation has been described as disturbing as they felt the need to provide the allied forces with information which was considered forgery. It was observed that if the American intelligence forces were working as a team in such a team they would have been in a better position to verify the authenticity of the information given by the British intelligence agencies during the war. (Andrew, C1996)The intelligence agencies confusion cost America as it was caught unawares when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor but the same systems were to work together to meet the new challenges that were presented as the war progressed. America as a nation was faced with a challenge, it had to make decisions regarding its involvement in a war that was largely seen as a European affair, its intelligence system has to gather enough information and in this case clandestine details concerning her enemies so that it can take the necessary steps.

The conduct of the intelligence agencies in the course of carrying their investigation made them clash with human rights activists and the society in general. They were perceived as retrogressive as far as human rights protection was concerned. Some of their activities were tantamount to

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violating basic human rights guaranteed by the American constitution.

However; the role of these agencies can not be underestimated as they played a crucial role in the Second World War and eventually America

becoming one of the powerful nations on earth. Reference Andrew, C (1996)

For the Presidents Eye Only: Secret Intelligence and American Presidency from Washington to Bush, New York Harper Perennial