

# NAKED CAME THE AGENT<sup>and</sup> Other Stories the CIA Doesn't Want You to Read.

.....By WARREN HINCKLE

"Where else could a red-blooded American boy lie, cheat, steal, rape and pillage with the sanction and blessing of the All-Highest?"

—Colonel George White,  
on working for the CIA.

**H**ERE IT IS NOT EVEN WINTER, AND already the powers that be are plotting to take the heat out of next summer's reading by plugging forever the leaks of the kind of CIA secrets that end up in paperbacks with girls in pink panty hose on the cover. The way it was, an aspiring pulp novelist could, just for the price of the asking, write Washington for the juicy details of the CIA stealing a sample of King Farouk's urine, or making a porn movie starring President Sukarno of Indonesia, or putting on the assassinate-Castro payroll mobsters who shared the President's girlfriend with him.

All of this is the stuff of fiction but true. If you had reason to know, or simply inordinate curiosity, you could write to Washington under the Freedom of Information Act and demand that the CIA 'fess up to what it had been doing with the unvouchered funds bestowed on it from the taxpayers' largesse. But the net effect of the bills that have been tiptoeing through Congress would be that the CIA no longer would have to answer questions about its past peccadilloes, and would be granted its ultimate wish—a U.S. version of Britain's Official Secrets Act, which would make it a crime for anyone to make public the CIA's crimes.

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WARREN HINCKLE writes a weekly column for the San Francisco Chronicle. He is the author, with William Turner, of *The Fish Is Red*, the story of the secret war against Castro, which will soon be published by Times Books.

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The bottom line rationale for all this is that famous Nixonian pretext, national security. "The job of the Executive is to keep from the people what they ought not to know and to keep from the press what they ought not to print," Nixon told the returning Vietnam POWs at a White House Moral Majority-type party where divorced POWs were not among the welcome. National security is a thing rarely defined, although when it comes to the CIA I take it to mean that it would be harmful to the national defense to have the government look like a horse's ass.

From a purely personal standpoint, this is a depressing prospect. Perhaps the weirdest of all the CIA's domestic misadventures took place in the village of San Francisco, where I live, and no one in my home town would have ever known about it if an Eastern Seaboard journalist hadn't sued the government under the Freedom of Information Act.

The CIA, after considerable stalling, coughed up 16,000 pages of documents about a classified project called MK/ULTRA, which had to do with experimenting with mad scientists' ways of messing with people's minds. Among the project's installations was a national security whorehouse on Telegraph Hill; there unsuspecting johns would be compromised by ladies in CIA employ and slipped LSD mickeys while a short, fat, bald spy sat on a portable toilet watching through a two-way mirror and sipping martinis.

The hard-drinking CIA Kojak was Colonel George White, half-spook, half-narc, a self-proclaimed hard-liner who loved gin, hated hookers, and pinched dopers with the zeal of a Torquemada. He was the clown who arrested Billie Holiday. White worked for the federal narcs for decades in New York and San Francisco. When he finally retired to Stinson Beach, a surf-oriented community just around the bend from the Golden Gate Bridge, he spent his reclining years glued to a high-powered infrared telescope; he searched the beach looking for telltale signs of people lighting up joints, whereupon he would call the local constabulary.

The nightclub-hopping colonel (an old OSS title) cultivated local reporters like hothouse roses and had a reputation as a fine fellow until in 1977, after his death, Freedom of Information documents revealed that White had led a double life. By night he chased dopesters, by day he operated as a CIA behavior-mod witch doctor. From the mid-fifties to the mid-sixties he ran CIA drug houses in the pad on Telegraph Hill, a house in Mill Valley, and a slick-ugly motel near the Golden Gate Bridge, where strange and dreadful things went on before his beady eyes—glued to the see-through mirrors.

"If we were scared enough of a drug not to try it on ourselves, we sent it to San Francisco," a CIA memorandum

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read. (White and his spook colleagues would occasionally get one another stoned and take notes, in the interest of national security.) The items tested in the Bay Area included psychochemicals, itching powders, LSD in aerosol spray cans, diarrhea-inducers, sensory-deprivation techniques—and drug-coated swizzle sticks. These last the CIA tested in Tenderloin bars by sticking them in the drinks of unwitting citizens of the demimonde, who would then take off like UFOs. The advantage of Tenderloin-testing was that such behavior there passed for normal.

The prostitutes who lured guinea pigs within range of Colonel White's two-way mirrors were procured through the good colonel's "close working relationship with police authorities," according to another CIA document. From his director's seat on the privy, the colonel reigned supreme over a sexual technology that filmed, recorded, and still-photographed every stoned and kinky moment for the detailed scrutiny of his CIA superiors. The goal was to acquire the psychochemical know-how to turn the average American into a kamikaze pilot at a moment's notice. The Frisco freak show was code-named Operation Midnight Climax.

Around the time that Colonel White was setting up his U.S. government safehouses stocked with booze and drugs (the premises, incidentally, were used in recreational hours by White's cop buddies, and there were complaints from neighbors about guys wearing guns in shoulder holsters running around chasing women in various states of undress), scientists in the employ of the United States Army were spraying San Francisco Bay with biological warfare germs, just to see what would happen. The CIA was also releasing unknown uncontrolled substances in the vehicle tunnels and on the highways of Manhattan and dropping germ-filled light bulbs in the subways.

What happened in San Francisco was that a lot of people got sick. At least one person, Edward J. Nevin, died. His children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren have joined in an \$11 million suit against the U.S. government for bringing about his wrongful death from a pneumonia-related bacteria called *Serratia marcescens*. No one would ever have known this had happened had not the relevant documents been pried

out under the Freedom of Information Act.

If you wonder about the government's ability to separate the wheat of secret information from the chaff of bureaucratic cover-up, it is instructive to note that one of the passages the CIA deleted from the famously agency-censored 1974 book by Victor Marchetti and John Marks, *The CIA and The Cult of Intelligence*, was Henry Kissinger's rationale for the CIA's covert overthrow of the constitutionally elected Allende government in Chile: "I don't see why we need to stand by and watch a country go Communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people." I did not run across this memorable quotation in the good doctor's memoirs.

In 1973 CIA director Richard Helms ordered the destruction of all MK/ULTRA mind-control project records. However, the shredders overlooked something. A 1976 Freedom of Information Act lawsuit brought by CIA critic Marks turned up seven boxes of MK/ULTRA financial records, including the generous expenditures of unvouchered funds on Colonel White's fun and games. The last CIA payment to the colonel was in February of 1965, in the amount of \$1100 for "undercover agents for operations." This is a CIA euphemism for prostitutes. Marks also located CIA documents showing that some of the experiments were to develop chemical and biological agents for "executive action-type operations." "Executive action" is the CIA euphemism for assassination.

Other documents dragged by Marks from a reluctant CIA revealed that the agency had been carrying out similar drug and behavior-mod experiments in prisons like California's Vacaville, with inmates as guinea pigs. Just what was being tested is unclear, as most relevant medical records have been filed in the burn bag. One extant CIA document states that the purpose of such tests at Holmesburg State Prison in Pennsylvania was to find "a compound that could stimulate a heart attack or a stroke in the targeted individual."

Marks published his Freedom of Information documents in a 1979 book, *The Search for The Manchurian Candidate: The CIA and Mind Control*. Under the new laws being sought by the CIA, that book would be unpublishable. For that matter, so would this article.

**T**HE PRESENT CIA PINCER MOVE FOR ITS Official Secrets Act is the agency's end game in a strategy of disinformation and manipulation of the press dating back to the mid-1970s. The CIA has traditionally had a good press, which, for most of its purposes, meant no press at all. Former CIA director Richard Helms used to treat the lords and ladies of the Washington press establishment to lunch in the director's private dining room and send them home happy with Madeira and stuffed to the gills with nasty bits of intelligence about rival services, particularly the hated spies of the Pentagon. Helms artfully utilized the press—with few exceptions—to tickle the noses of rival superagencies, while keeping the CIA rather remarkably out of the spotlight of investigative reporting.

Even when the agency did get into hot water, as in the 1975 flap over spying on domestic recusants and radlibs, it exhibited a remarkable ability to recoup by showing a little leg to the press. Helms's successor as CIA director, William Colby, successfully detoured attention from the CIA's domestic sins by allowing a glimpse of its James Bond side—the overpraised Howard Hughes-Russian-mystery-submarine-raising caper. This was a longstanding agency "secret"—Chuck Colson had leaked it in his post-Watergate singing, but the press was disinclined to believe a man who said he'd run over his grandmother for Nixon, even if he had recently found God—

that the agency held for release until the most convenient moment. Colby orchestrated the press coverage with an experienced conductor's hand, hyping the excitement by pleading with editors not to print the story, the way Bre'r Rabbit pleaded not to be thrown in the briar patch.

**D**URING THE 1975 SENATE COMMITTEE hearings into intelligence practices, the CIA adopted a game plan of suffering the purgative rhetoric of its critics and even offering to cooperate in its own investigation. The architect of this strategy was CIA director Colby, a steely-eyed Boy Scout master who in Vietnam had run the notorious Phoenix program of wholesale assassinations. Colby flogged himself with a gray-flannel whip and apologized to the senators for venial sins (Colby is a card-carrying Catholic) such as steaming open mail to Peking to see if Wo Fat had acquired a capacity in invisible ink. The CIA, by such curtsying to congressional review, avoided the wholesale destruction of its domestic assets. These included proprietary companies, secret paramilitary air bases and munitions dumps on U.S. soil, and countless arms-length contract operatives through whom it had developed a capability for almost-overnight intervention in other peoples' business. All the while the Senate was "investigating" an apologetic CIA, the CIA was busy secretly "destabilizing" Angola.

Ex-CIA directors waddled into Congress like so many penguins to push the agency disinformation line. Before the committees Richard Helms, as is his practice, lied. James Schlesinger was the short-lived director of the CIA whose stewardship was tempestuous in the extreme (he ran the CIA like some persnickety cocaine tycoon and traveled with bodyguards because agency Old Boys kept threatening to clean his clock). His government career was distinguished by his action as Nixon's secretary of defense in posting guards around the Ultimate Button lest King Richard the Bad succumb to the final temptation as he fell from power. Director Schlesinger dissembled most subtly, withdrawing prior blunt characterizations of CIA misdeeds as "misdemeanors" and suggesting the defense of comparative statistics.

If the CIA had really collected 10,000 names of U.S. citizens wantonly exercising various constitutional rights, well, so did superlib Ramsey Clark, when he was a black-shoe attorney general in his pre-Hush Puppies days. The Justice Department, it turned out, had sent Ramsey's names over to the CIA, but the computer tapes didn't match, so the names never mated. (It was disclosed later through various Freedom of Information Act requests that the CIA kept files on 50,000 members of the California Peace and Freedom party alone during 1969 and 1970; the body-count reports of how many names the CIA actually had in its usual-suspect files range from an index of 300,000 individuals and organizations developed under its six-year Operation CHAOS, to the existence of a computerized list of nearly 1.5 million names compiled during two decades of illegally opening first-class letters to and from American citizens.)

Disinformation is the intelligence technique of providing or leaking half-truths or outright lies to confuse and disorient the enemy—in this case the American public. The CIA's upfront disinformation expert was E. Howard Hunt, the old bumbletoes who used his agency-honed skills so clumsily in scissors-and-paste faking of a State Department cable to hang the Kennedy administration for the assassination of the Tojo of Vietnam, Ngo Dinh Diem. Past and present CIA directors from Helms through Admiral Turner have more skillfully

applied the technique.

Colby, for instance, in a CIA white paper drafted for the Senate Intelligence Committee, referred obliquely to "the agency's relationships with American students and other associations and foundations revealed in 1967 by *Ramparts Magazine*." Colby described these as "confidential relationships." I know something of these "confidential relationships" as I was the editor of *Ramparts* at the time of which Colby speaks. They amounted to a fifteen-year, billion-dollar bribe to make presumably independent American groups quick to do the bidding of the patriarch in Langley, Virginia. The CIA had clandestine cash conduits to the boardrooms of the mightiest and the bell towers of the loftiest American institutions. CIA agents moved about the country like Avon Calling—recycling intellectuals, coopting universities, buying labor unions, and renting students as spies. The CIA sought, and to a large extent achieved, the covert control of the international operations of most important American professional and cultural organizations: journalists, educators, jurists, businessmen—the works.

That Colby, in his confessional accounting of the CIA's domestic endeavors, attempted to make light of his agency's appalling program of massive subversion and bribery of Americans is indicative of the degree of candor one can expect from the CIA as to the true nature of its derring-do. While it was promoting its venial sins with born-again piety, the agency was insulating its deep-cover operatives from congressional review by transferring them to the DEA and other federal units that serve the CIA—Potemkin village style. It was also arranging for the continued funding of *verboden* domestic and international operations through private business or internationalist do-good organizations—as well as vest-pocket financial conveniences such as the Castle Bank of Nassau, where mob and CIA funds swam in the same offshore sea. The *Wall Street Journal* revealed earlier this year that a major IRS investigation of the Castle Bank's depositors, involving hundreds of millions of dollars in penalties, had been scuttled by the CIA on the familiar grounds of national security because the bank was a

**CIA agents moved about the country like Avon Calling, recycling intellectuals and renting students.**

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CIA conduit for covert operations against Cuba and other out-of-favor countries.

The CIA has had sophisticated motives in leaking news to the press of its Katzenjammer Kids dirty tricks. If the agency readily confirms a newsman's suspicion, it has a reason. When *New York Times* man Seymour Hersh sought to confirm tips on CIA shenanigans, it was director Colby himself who spilled the beans on the agency's domestic spying. Among the desired consequences of Hersh's predictable front-page stories was the ignominious departure of James Angleton, the CIA's poetry-minded, orchid-growing, intransigent counterintelligence chief. Angleton was a thorn in the side of other grand poohbahs of espionage, since his department substantially controlled both the coveted nexus with Israeli intelligence and the agency's ties to foreign and domestic police programs—the hottest growth area of espionage-establishment expansion.



Watergate was perhaps the most famous spill in the history of calculated leaks. It is now approaching the category of conventional wisdom that, contrary to the fearless independence conveyed by Robert Redford et al in the cinema *All The President's Men*, Woodstein was in fact used by the CIA to steer the Watergate investigation away from the agency's own involvement. This thesis is convincingly argued in the much-

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overlooked Republican literature of Watergate, principally in H. R. Haldeman's in many ways remarkable treatise on his master's knavery, *The Ends of Power*.

Lest one think the agency has lost its touch, or the post-Woodstein press has given up the practice of swallowing whole the CIA's spoon-feeding, consider the recent John Dinges and Saul Landau book on the Orlando Letelier assassination. It documents how the CIA planted the thin theory in the *Washington Star*, the *New York Times*, and *Newsweek* that "leftist extremists" had murdered Letelier to make him a "martyr" figure and thus blacken the good name of the Chilean secret police. By such disinformation and by withholding from the FBI the CIA's prior knowledge that a Chilean assassination squad had entered the United States on dirty business, the agency effectively steered the Letelier investigation far from the considerable question of the CIA's ongoing relationship to Chile's gestapo, the DINA, which came into this world as a Chilean rib from the Adam of the CIA.

These CIA disinformation efforts have served to pave the way for the agency's ultimate goal of a U.S. version of Great Britain's notorious Official Secrets Act. The agency's strategy has been to accept the penalties for its confessed excesses in exchange for a new CIA charter that would recognize the agency's right to protect "legitimate" intelligence secrets. Thanks to the born-again hawkishness of the Carter administration, even the "restrictions" the agency was willing to trade off for criminal sanctions against agency whistle blowers have been tempered to allow the CIA to burglarize and wiretap, use journalists and academics as spies, conduct covert operations with drastically reduced congressional oversight, and not bother the President with the specifics of dirty tricks.

This Open Sesame charter would be in addition to a bill pending in the Senate (passed by the House) that would make it a criminal offense for the public or the press to identify a covert CIA operative, even if the operative's name had been gleaned from public sources or had been previously reported. This legislation would in effect apply the law of libel—it is libelous to repeat a libel—to any newspaper or magazine that carried a news story originated by another publication exposing an illegal CIA operation.

The House passed the bill after considerable publicity over the fact that the CIA station chief in Jamaica had his home shot up after his name was revealed by an anti-CIA paper, the *Covert Action Information Bulletin*. Although the shooting came at the perfect time for the CIA to push its cause with Congress, it later developed that the publication had in fact first named the CIA man, identified as one N. Richard Kinsman, back in 1979,

putting into question the agency's application of the principle of cause and effect. Kinsman's maid, who might have been a fair witness, unfortunately slept through the attack, which allegedly involved the use of machine guns and hand grenades. The CIA man did not bother to notify the police; instead he called the *Daily Gleaner*, an anti-Manley newspaper (Michael Manley is the Jamaican leftist whose government the CIA is attempting to "destabilize"), which reported the incident as if it had been the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand.

Such restrictions and penalties would put an end to the Marchettis, Agees, Snepps, and Stockwells—the CIA whistle blowers who revealed the agency's dirty tricks because they were presumptuous enough to think the American public had a right to know what the government was doing. The proposed CIA charter would also exempt the CIA from most provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, effectively cutting off access to information about past CIA activities—from drug experimentation to drug trafficking to just plain murder.

Legislation for the proposed charter petered out in Congress this year but will doubtless be back in 1981. In its various forms, it amounts to an Official Secrets Act without saying so. This year the Senate helped ease the way by passing an "Intelligence Oversight Act," which contributed to the CIA's goal of turning its critics into a chorus of castrati. The Hughes-Ryan Amendment of 1974, establishing congressional review of CIA covert operations, specified that eight committees be notified; the new act cuts this to two.

**T**HE SUPREME COURT HAS ALSO DONE ITS bit. In a decision against former CIA officer Frank Snepp (who wrote a book about the agency's bungling in Vietnam)—a decision that many legal observers find startling in its implications—the Court ruled that even without a specific "secrecy agreement" any employee with a government contract is in effect under a court-constructed prior restraint to seek permission for any and all writings about the government from the government—and thus goodbye to whistle blowing. The Court's decision seemed to give legal underpinning to the singular doctrine developed by the Carter administration in the H-bomb "secrets" case—that certain things are "born classified," whether or not a bureaucrat has gotten around to labeling them so.

The country seems to be moving toward a docile acceptance of the inevitability of the CIA Official Secrets logic. Even the loyal civil liberties opposition is acting strangely. When Nat Hentoff wrote an article in the *Village Voice* criticizing the ACLU logicians for failing to come down heavily enough against a portion of the proposed Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act establishing "secret courts" to grant orders for national security wiretaps, the indignant ACLU brass wrote a letter to the editor arguing in self defense that the act was not so bad because it established "standards for surveillance of Americans." This sounds like a phrase out of the 1950s.

The CIA, like the elephant of proverb, can resemble a tree, a snake, a wall, or a rope, depending on where the blind take hold of it. The CIA's five-year push for an Official Secrets Act of its own appears to be heading for a conclusion that will leave the American public fumbling in the dark, groping for the truth.

As Lieutenant Ramon Vargas said in Orson Welles's *Touch of Evil*, "A policeman's job is only easy in a police state." In the future, maybe what we don't find out about the past will be good for us. □

**NUCLEAR NIGHTMARES, An Investigation into Possible Wars,**  
by Nigel Calder. Viking Press, 168 pp., \$10.95.

## Apocalypse soon

FRED KAPLAN

**N**UCLEAR WAR IS A HOT property again. Reports of its prospects are so commonplace that even the fairly inattentive newspaper reader can recite something about limited nuclear war strategies, civil defense, and the SS-18 and MX missiles. Yet something is missing from this "liveliest discussion of defense issues since the days of the Missile Gap," as some have described the present period. And that is a sense of the horror of it all.

The dread of mass destruction has been replaced by facile calculations of whether, after a "nuclear exchange," the "throw-weight" of the "residual Soviet ICBM force" will outweigh that of the United States by two or four times. One eminent defense analyst has publicly referred to the Poseidon warhead—more than twice as powerful as the bomb dropped on Hiroshima—as a "pinprick." Like a billion dollars in the federal budget, the concept of even a one-megaton bomb has simply lost all power to impress. Discussions of nuclear war have always, by nature, had an unreal air about them; these days, as a friend in the defense-consulting business likes to quip, we're moving out of surrealism and into abstract expressionism.

The value of Nigel Calder's *Nuclear Nightmares* is that he attempts, and quite successfully, to shock us out of this dreary dreamland, to expose us to just how real and even likely the possibility of nuclear war is becoming. After writing a book on the future of weaponry a dozen years ago, Calder dropped out of this bleak business, he tells us, and spent a jolly decade jotting on about the Milky Way, Einstein's theory of relativity, and

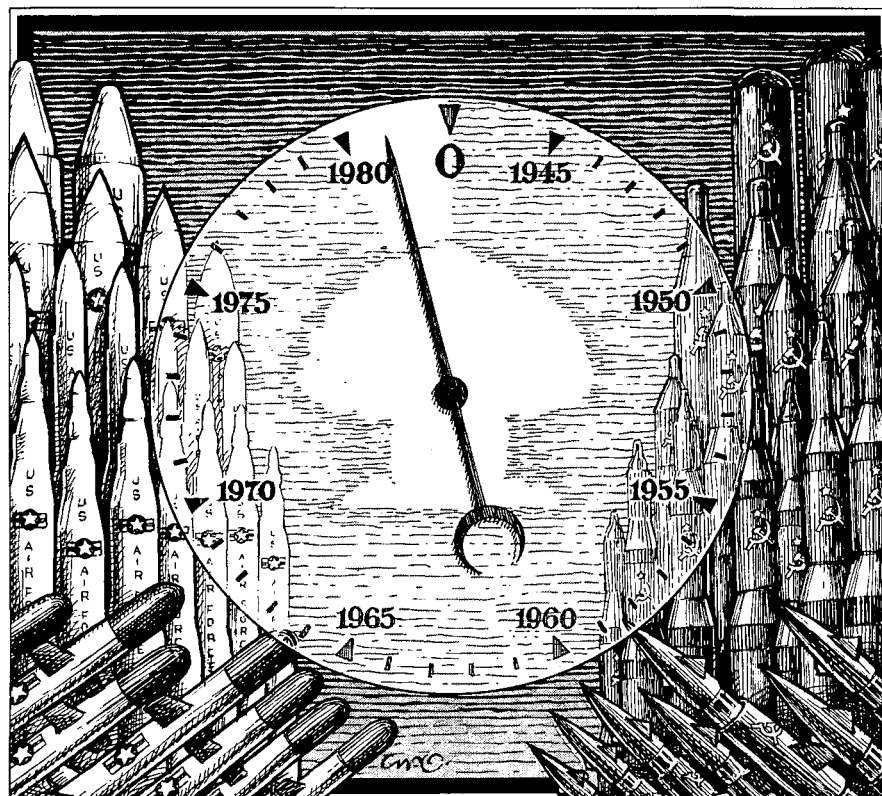
other figments of the finer side of scientific endeavor. He put the new MIRVED missiles and so forth out of his mind—an evasion that he likens to what biologists call "displacement activity," in which "perturbed animals engage in tasks irrelevant to their predicament."

When Calder reentered the macabre world of nuclear madness, the subject of his latest book, he was dismayed: "When I steeled myself at last to lift the stone again and see what was now crawling about underneath, it was worse than I expected. . . . The risk of a holocaust is growing with every year that passes, and whether we shall avoid it between now and 1990 is at least questionable."

A fine writer and popularizer of science, Calder has composed a very grim

book indeed. He guides us into the dark labyrinths through which the superpowers might very well wend their way to war and holocaust—caused, incidentally, not by insanity or crazed adventurism, but rather, by the inexorably deadly logic of nuclear deterrence in an age of frantic international tension and high technology.

His investigative journeys follow four possible pathways to a future nuclear war: (1) a conventional war in Europe escalating to nuclear conflagration; (2) regional conflicts between nuclear-armed countries, especially in the explosive Middle East, that draw in their rival superpower allies; (3) accidental war, caused by failures in, or fear for the vulnerability of, extremely sensitive "command-control-communication" systems; and (4) most discussed popularly these days, the counterforce option, the United States and the USSR poised with extremely accurate warheads that can destroy each other's nuclear weapons, a hair-trigger situation that can create, in times of enormous tension, positive incentives for preemptive nuclear attack.



FRED KAPLAN writes on political and military affairs for the New York Times Magazine and Scientific American as well as INQUIRY.