



May 2002

Democrats on Intelligence

- In May 1996, 154 Democrats—nearly four out of five voting Democrats—voted to **cut** the U.S. intelligence budget. 80% of Members voting for this cut were Democrats. (*H.Amdt. 1080 to H.R. 3259, 104th Congress*)
- In July 1997, 158 Democrats—four out of five voting Democrats—voted to **cut** the U.S. intelligence budget. 87% of Members voting for this cut were Democrats. (*H.Amdt. 217 to H.R. 1775, 105th Congress*)
- In May 1998, 98 Democrats—the majority (51%) of voting Democrats—voted to **cut** the U.S. intelligence budget by 5%. 82% of those Members voting for this cut were Democrats. (*H.Amdt. 614 to H.R. 3694, 105th Congress*)
- In May 1999, 90% of the Members voting for a 5% **cut** in the U.S. intelligence budget were Democrats (61 Democrats—or 32% of voting Democrats—voted for the cut at this time). (*H.Amdt. 92 to H.R. 1555, 106th Congress*)

See the last page of this document for links to the roll-call votes referenced here.

Justifications made by the Democrats (plus Independent Bernie Sanders) about the intelligence budget and the Central Intelligence Agency at the time are reflected in the following statements in the Congressional Record:

Mr. Speaker, what is the mission of the CIA in a post-cold war environment? **Is it really necessary to continue allocating \$30 billion to the CIA? Should we not use these funds for other purposes such as job development or school infrastructure rehabilitation?**

—*Maxine Waters (D-CA), Congressional Record CIA OPERATIONS, March 18, 1997, Page: H1104*

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So as my colleagues know, here we are, we have got about \$112 billion bill to refurbish schools that are falling apart across this country, we have got 10 million kids in this country without

health insurance, and we are spending, according to the New York Times, over \$30 billion on intelligence, and the cold war is what? Nine years, seven years, eight years over with?
—*David Bonior (D-MI), Congressional Record, July 9, 1997, Page H4964*

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I am here to say, I think the day for the CIA has come and gone. I think it has no mission that is worthy of the \$30 billion that we are paying for its so-called operations. I think the CIA cannot scrub itself. This business of scrubbing, talking about they are getting rid of the terrorists and the drug traffickers and the murderers, is a day late and a dollar short. Not only have they involved themselves with the scum of the Earth, many of whom are responsible for horrendous crimes against our people, but it is no need to even try and make the American people believe that it is necessary to be involved with those kind of people anymore. For what?

...

I submit that it is time to totally eliminate the CIA .

—*Maxine Waters (D-CA), Congressional Record CIA OPERATIONS March 18, 1997*

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The very basic but baffling instinct and superstition of this congressional village is to insist that tampering with the secret budget of the CIA is taboo. **The CIA is untouchable. There is fear that dangerous, invisible demons will rise up and destroy our village if we disturb this almighty Washington wizard.**

It is not reasonable, what we do here. Downsizing, streamlining, and restructuring are vitally necessary for this Federal agency, just as it was useful in other Federal agencies. The era of big government is over. We are proud to keep repeating that the era of big government is over. **The era of the big unaccountable CIA should also be over, but nobody wants to touch the big, unaccountable CIA .**

—*Rep. Major Owens, Congressional Record, July 9, 1997, Page H4967*

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[Repeated from 4 months prior] What is the mission of the CIA in the post-cold war environment? Is it necessary to continue allocating \$30 billion to this intelligence effort? Should we not use these funds for other purposes such as job development or school infrastructure or rehabilitation? ... It is not enough to cleanse some of the rogue agents employed by the CIA in their clandestine activities. We really need to eliminate the CIA .

—*Maxine Waters (D-CA), Congressional Record, July 9, 1997, Page H4967*

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Mr. Chairman, how can we increase funding for an already bloated intelligence budget at exactly the same time as some propose major cuts for millions of low- and moderate-income citizens? How is it okay to say more for the intelligence budget at the same time as this Congress cut \$115 billion from Medicare? Tell the senior citizens of this country whose benefits we have cut back on.

...

Mr. Chairman, even in Washington the \$1.3 billion that we cut from the intelligence budget is a lot of money, and let me tell my colleagues what we can purchase with that \$1.3 billion if we get our priorities straight.

In Vermont and throughout this country, seniors are finding it difficult to pay for their prescription drugs. Legislation has been offered which would provide up to \$500 each in prescription drug assistance for seniors. **This \$1.3 billion that we cut from a bloated intelligence budget could provide 2,600,000 seniors up to \$500 each in their prescription drug assistance.**

...

Nine hundred sixty-nine thousand families could benefit from Section 8 housing programs if we cut that \$1.3 billion. In the State of Vermont, we have a long waiting list for Section 8. That is true all over this country. **Two hundred forty thousand more children could attend the Head Start program if we cut this \$1.3 billion.**

...

So, Mr. Chairman, what I would just like to say at this point is that the Cold War is over. We do need an intelligence budget, but there is very ample evidence that the budget that we are being asked to support today is bloated.

—***Bernie Sanders (I-VT)** Congressional Record, INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1999 May 07, 1998*

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“...We are not dealing here with the NEA or the CPB or low-income fuel assistance. **We are here dealing with national security**, which means it is serious money.”

—***Barney Frank (D-MA)**, in support of his amendment to cut the intelligence budget, Congressional Record, July 9, 1997, Page: H4986*

To view the complete roll-call votes referenced at the beginning of this document, click on the following links:

1996 vote: <http://clerkweb.house.gov/cgi-bin/vote.exe?year=1996&rollnumber=187>

1997 vote: <http://clerkweb.house.gov/cgi-bin/vote.exe?year=1997&rollnumber=255>

1998 vote: <http://clerkweb.house.gov/cgi-bin/vote.exe?year=1998&rollnumber=137>

1999 vote: <http://clerkweb.house.gov/cgi-bin/vote.exe?year=1999&rollnumber=129>