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Investigating the Spook-Industrial Complex

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Distinctly Catholic

All of Washington is abuzz over a Washington Post investigative report into the vast network of public and private security organizations that have sprung up since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. The two reporters, Dana Priest and William Arkin, are to be commended for this two-year investigation that concludes: "The government has built a national security and intelligence system so big, so complex and so hard to manage, no one really knows if it's fulfilling its most important purpose: keeping citizens safe."

It is clear from the report, that since 9/11 terrorism has been one problem that both parties have been content to throw money at. In a sense, I see no objection to such an approach at first. Throwing money at a problem sometimes works, encouraging entrepreneurial solutions that might not have survived a bureaucratic review, involving private companies as well as the government in trying to devise new strategies and technologies to combat terrorism, and generally leaving no stone unturned. That said, now is the time to devise a managerial, bureaucratic method of oversight to assess how that money was spent and is being spent.

People forget that then-Senator Harry Truman rose to national prominence largely because of investigations he led into corruption and excessive spending by military contractors during World War II. Repeat: during World War II. Which Senator will have the courage to begin an investigation into the current anti-terrorism spending to root out excess and corruption? Honor awaits.

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