Spies and Safeguards

Trace the growth and limits of U.S. counterintelligence

TOT.C.8.2.F "development of the counterintelligence state"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline actions that expanded or limited federal counterintelligence power, then write E or L above each underline to trace how that power changed over time.

Who Watches for Spies?

1 During World War I, fears of German spying helped Congress pass the Espionage Act of 1917. It punished interference with military operations and the transfer of national defense information to an enemy. After the war, federal agents raided meeting places of suspected radicals during the Red Scare of 1919 and 1920. Many targets were political activists, not proven spies. These events revealed an early problem for a growing counterintelligence state. Officials claimed they were protecting the country, but broad suspicion could turn political beliefs into grounds for investigation.

2 After World War II, tension with the Soviet Union made the search for spies a continuing peacetime mission. The National Security Act of 1947 created the Central Intelligence Agency, or CIA, and the National Security Council. The CIA focused on foreign intelligence, while the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or FBI, investigated suspected espionage inside the United States. Separate agencies gathered information abroad and at home. Yet their assignments did not eliminate the risk of overreach. In the 1950s, congressional hearings and federal employee loyalty investigations often treated suspected communist ties as a security threat without proving that a person had passed secrets.

3 In 1956, the FBI began COINTELPRO, a secret program to disrupt groups it labeled threats. Its targets expanded beyond suspected communists to include civil rights and antiwar activists. Agents sometimes spread false information and tried to divide organizations, actions far removed from catching spies. After these abuses became public, the Senate's Church Committee investigated intelligence agencies in 1975 and 1976. Congress passed the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act in 1978, requiring court orders for many foreign-intelligence wiretaps inside the United States. The expanded security system had prompted demands for limits and oversight.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the federal government's search for spies change after World War II, and what concern from the earlier period remained?

2. How did the 1947 law organize the government's intelligence work? Explain the different roles described for the CIA and FBI.

3. How did COINTELPRO's actions show that counterintelligence efforts had moved beyond catching spies?

4. What government response followed public knowledge of intelligence abuses, and how did it seek to limit federal power?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine Congress is reviewing a new peacetime counterintelligence program in 1980. Write one paragraph recommending two safeguards, and use two historical examples from the passage to explain why those safeguards matter.

ANSWER KEY

Spies and Safeguards

HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.C.8.2.F

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline actions that expanded or limited federal counterintelligence power, then write E or L above each underline to trace how that power changed over time. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the federal government's search for spies change after World War II, and what concern from the earlier period remained?	**It became a continuing peacetime mission with separate agencies working abroad and at home. As during the Red Scare, suspicion could still fall on people without proof of spying.**
2	How did the 1947 law organize the government's intelligence work? Explain the different roles described for the CIA and FBI.	**The law created the CIA, which focused on foreign intelligence. The FBI investigated suspected espionage inside the United States.**
3	How did COINTELPRO's actions show that counterintelligence efforts had moved beyond catching spies?	**It targeted civil rights and antiwar activists and used false information to disrupt organizations, rather than only investigating suspected espionage.**
4	What government response followed public knowledge of intelligence abuses, and how did it seek to limit federal power?	**The Church Committee investigated intelligence agencies, and the 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act required court orders for many foreign-intelligence wiretaps inside the United States.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Congress should require a judge's warrant before agents search meeting places and require confidential congressional reviews of investigative methods. During the Red Scare of 1919 and 1920, agents raided meeting places of suspected radicals, many of whom were not proven spies. A judge could check whether a proposed search has a sound basis. COINTELPRO agents spread false information and tried to divide activist groups. Regular reviews could uncover such tactics before they continue for years. Both safeguards would help investigators pursue actual espionage without treating political activity as proof of a threat.

Accept historically supported explanations that distinguish investigating espionage from targeting political activity. For Part 3, look for two distinct safeguards, each connected to a relevant example from the passage.