



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

The AAA and the CIA?

By DAVID PRICE

ST MARTIN'S COLLEGE, OLYMPIA, WA

With little notice by anthropologists, there has been increasing documentation of the extent to which American intelligence agencies monitored and influenced the development of American social sciences throughout the Cold War. One of the ways these agencies accomplished this was through covert contact with professional associations—either as silent observers at professional meetings or as silent partners entering into secret agreements with individual members or official bodies within these associations.

A wide literature has developed that documents some of the interactions between American social science professional associations and

Studies centers were manipulated by the CIA and Pentagon.

While the history of the AAA has been punctuated by inquiries into accusations that anthropologists have undertaken work for intelligence agencies, there has been little research into links between the AAA and these agencies. A variety of documents released to me under FOIA establish that the CIA and FBI have monitored activities within our Association. Further, documents from the Association's archives establish that, in the 1950s, the AAA entered into a series of covert relationships with the CIA. One of these relationships involved working to establish a liaison position between the Association and CIA. Another involved the Executive Board agreeing to secretly give the CIA a cross-indexed roster of the Association's membership detailing individuals' backgrounds and areas of expertise.

The chronology and historical background of these events are complicated and are described in another paper (to be presented during the Association's Annual Business Meeting, beginning at 7:30 pm, Thursday, November 16). Only a brief overview of the Association's documents relating to this episode appears below.

In February 1951, AAA Executive Secretary Frederick Johnson wrote the Executive Board that, due to numerous requests by various governmental agencies, he believed the Association needed to produce a detailed roster of its membership. Johnson—an un-elected, non-voting, *ex officio* member of the board—recommended that the AAA work with the CIA on this project. Throughout the Board's decision process and during later negotiations with the CIA, Johnson maneuvered—even to the point of exceeding his *ex officio* role—to bring the CIA and their computers into this project.

AAA President Howells wrote Johnson (3/3/51), that "the CIA proposal is ideal," and that under this proposal the CIA would keep a copy of the computerized roster data for their own uses. Howells indicated that if "a reasonable questionnaire, suitable to both parties, can be worked out, we will both get what we want, and except for the mailing [the CIA] will put the whole thing through from beginning to end, and the chances are we will get something that we want."

Board members received ballots with two action items regarding this proposed relationship between the Association and the CIA. The first item proposed that Johnson be authorized to

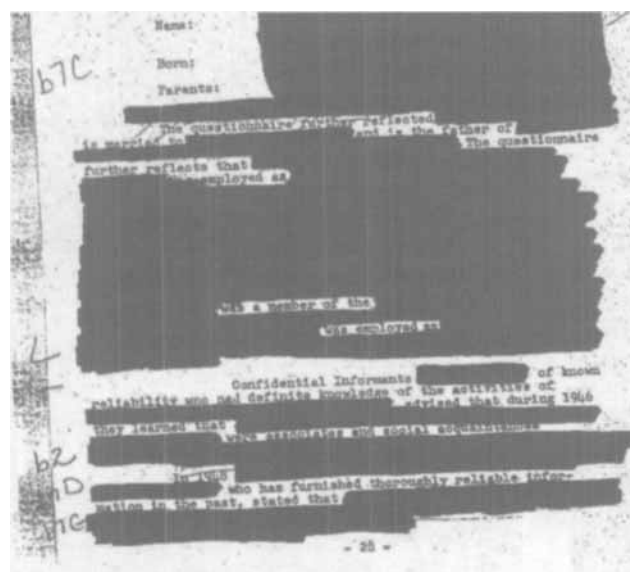
continue negotiations with the CIA regarding the production of a detailed roster of Association members; the second item requested authorization for Johnson to seek means for producing future rosters. The first ballot item is reproduced in full below because it clarifies the Executive Board's awareness of the CIA's involvement in compiling the roster, as well as the arrangements whereby CIA would keep a copy of the final product for their own uses:

The Executive Secretary is empowered to continue negotiations with Central Intelligence Agency for the purpose of compiling a roster of Anthropological Personnel. The final agreement will be based on the idea that the Anthropological Association will sponsor the roster and the Agency will do the technical work connected with it. The [Central Intelligence] Agency will be allowed to keep one copy of the roster for its own use and it will deliver to the Association a duplicate copy the use of which will not be restricted. The final agreement between the Association and the agency shall be such that the Association shall be liable only for mailing charges and such incidental expenses as it may be able to afford. The final agreement shall be approved by the Executive Board.

On March 29, 1951 Johnson informed the Board that the "Proposal that Executive Secretary continue negotiations with the Central Intelligence Agency to arrange for compilation of a roster of Anthropologists" had passed, as did the second ballot item authorizing Johnson to negotiate the production of future rosters. Negotiations with anthropologists working at the CIA were undertaken and a plan of action was proposed.

Johnson wrote the Board that the CIA offered the best opportunity for the Association despite the its insistence on secrecy (4/21/51). Johnson wrote that, "In searching for the ways and means of setting up a roster of Anthropologists I have a general proposal from [the] Central Intelligence Agency. This agency is reluctant to have its name connected with the proposal. It will do the work as generally and tentatively outlined below provided the Association will sponsor the project." In keeping with CIA's wishes, these arrangements were not made public.

The kinds of information to be collected by mailed questionnaires were negotiated in the summer and fall of 1951. The final questionnaire collected information on AAA members' geographical, linguistic and cultural expertise as well as their military background. What became of the information collected for the roster is presently unclear. Association records for this period do not contain a copy of a completed roster, and public and private searches for copies of the final roster have thus far been fruitless. FBI records reveal that the questionnaire was sent to the AAA membership and further indicate that the FBI believed this roster to have "been initiated by some Governmental agency, such as CIA, for the express purpose of obtaining intelligence data." The CIA has been uncooperative with my efforts to clarify the nature and extent of its contact with the AAA and its membership. At present we are left to wonder about the uses to which the CIA



Portion of AAA document acquired through the Freedom of Information Act

intelligence agencies. Benjamin Harris documented the FBI's monitoring of the American Psychological Association and the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues since the 1930s. In *Stalking the Sociological Imagination* (1999, Greenwood), Mike Keen used the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to document the FBI's surveillance of prominent sociologists as well as the meetings of the American Sociological Association. Christopher Simpson likewise established that the "FBI and US military intelligence agents kept the American Sociological Society conventions under surveillance in an effort to smoke out radicals." Sigmund Diamond's book, *Compromised Campus* (1992), used FOIA to painstakingly declassify CIA and FBI documents revealing the extent to which post-war Area

might have put such data as it engaged in anti-democratic and counterinsurgency activities in the decades that followed. I have hopes that some member of the Association reading this article knows the outcome of these negotiations with CIA, or what became of this roster.

All this raises troubling issues for our Association. These issues involve questions about a

variety of only partially documented links between anthropologists and intelligence agencies, as well as fundamental issues concerning the ethics of allowing secrecy in research. While raising these issues complicates our relationships with those we study, not confronting these issues stands to potentially damage both the interests of anthropologists and those we study. ■

Endangered Artifacts Saved

BY DARLENE LIZARRAGA
ARIZONA STATE MUSEUM

Save America's Treasures, a public-private partnership between the White House Millennium Council and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, has selected a portion of the pottery collection at Arizona State Museum for Official Project status.

ASM is the oldest and largest anthropology museum in the Southwest, as well as the home of the world's most comprehensive collection of Southwest Indian pottery. Approximately 20,000 of these vessels have been included for Official Project status. The designation acknowledges that the collection ranks among the nation's most urgent preservation priorities, along with icons such as the Fort McHenry flag that gave rise to the "Star Spangled Banner," the home of anti-slavery activist Harriet Tubman and the Revolutionary War headquarters of George Washington.

ASM began in 1893 as the Arizona Territorial Museum and has evolved into a major curatorial center for archaeological and ethnographic material. It currently occupies two buildings on the U of Arizona campus. One was built in 1925 as the UA Library. The 1935 building was constructed to be ASM's permanent home after the collections had migrated among several other campus build-

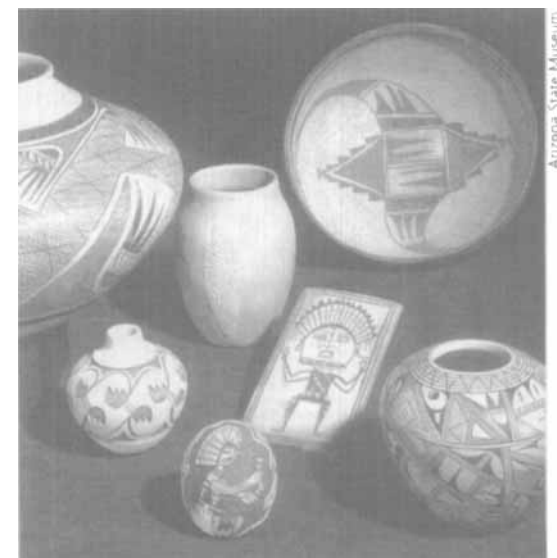
ings. Currently, both are inadequate for the task of storing environmentally sensitive collections, including the nationally prized ceramics.

The importance and immediacy of this project stems from it being the nation's largest collection of whole vessels from SW native cultures. The collection represents the artistic cultural traditions of every native culture in this region and reflects ancient and contemporary traditions. "The contemporary works are especially important because some people think our traditions no longer exist," says Daniel Preston, tribal member of the Tohono O'odham Nation. "Native cultures not only still exist, we are flourishing in ways never before imagined. And it is important for those of us who are living to have our ancestors' artistic accomplishments as reference points in the 21st century. I for one am happy that the US government has finally officially recognized the spirit of our ancestors."

With a \$400,000 grant from the National Park Service in support of the Pottery Project, ASM will begin the process of stabilizing the ceramics collection and make it more accessible not only to students, scholars and Native American groups but to the general public as well. With the public in mind, the museum wants to create a "visible vault" as a safe-haven for the 20,000 whole ves-

sels, which are now stored in 5 different areas, out of public view. The museum will install a glass wall to provide visual access to a space that will accommodate the entire collection, amassed and presented to the public in its entirety for the very first time. The storage facility will not only provide the vital atmospheric controls but will create a dynamic living exhibit and educational venue for this incomparable collection.

The museum and the university will soon launch a capital campaign to begin the comprehensive renovation and expansion needed to provide environmentally-controlled storage for the collection. "For over a century, the museum's staff has tirelessly yet quietly cared for a collection of great cultural and intellectual importance," says UA President Peter Likins. "It is time



An assortment of Hopi pottery from ASM's collection

we all take note of, and take part in, this vital process of preservation."

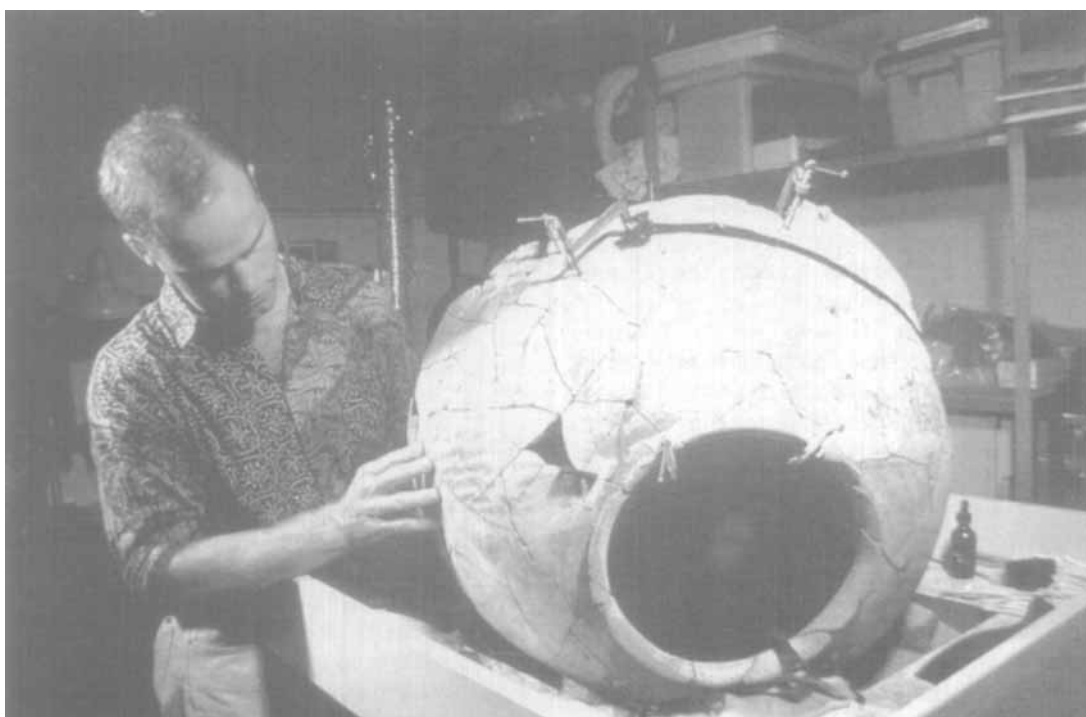
The museum's 20,000 whole vessel collection is divided into two major groups:

Archaeological: Museum holdings include the largest and most comprehensive collection of Hohokam pottery, one of the largest collections of mountain Mogollon pottery and the largest collection of Casas Grandes pottery in the US.

Ethnographic: Museum holdings include one of the most significant collections of Hopi and Tewa pottery in the country; the largest systematic collection of pottery from northwest Mexico (Tarahumara, Mayo, Pima Bajo, Yaqui, Warihiro); the nation's largest collections of historic Apache pottery, contemporary Navajo pottery and Tohono O'odham pottery dating to the 18th century; and significant examples of Maricopa, Yuman and Pueblo pottery.

Highlights from the collection are on display in an exhibit entitled "Saving Southwest Traditions: The Pottery Project" in ASM's north building (through Jan 2001). To find out how you can help, contact the museum's development office at 520/626-8381 or miriamn@u.arizona.edu. ■

Darlene Lizarraga is marketing coordinator at the Office of Development and Marketing, Arizona State Museum.



Conservation