



A Season of Inquiry Revisited: The Church Committee Confronts America's Spy Agencies

Loch K. Johnson

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The original edition of *A Season of Inquiry*, first published in 1986, offered the public an insider's account of the workings of the Church investigation and of the nation's espionage agencies, including the CIA's covert action against the democratically elected regime of Salvador Allende in Chile. In this new edition the author, then a special assistant to Senator Church, revisits the circumstances surrounding the investigation and subsequent, shocking report and reminds us its continuing relevance—in instances such as the Iran-Contra investigation, the 9/11 and Iraqi WMD intelligence failures, the Edward Snowden affair, and, most recently, the US Senate Torture Report.

A Season of Inquiry Revisited details a moment that was at once a high-water mark for intelligence accountability in the United States and a low point in the American people's trust of the agencies sworn to protect them. Coming on the heels of the Watergate scandal, the wrenching experience of the Vietnam War, and the release of the Pentagon Papers, revelations of domestic spying sent a shock wave through the nation and spurred the political establishment to action. While a White House panel focused narrowly on CIA spying at home, the Church Committee enlarged its investigation to include the FBI, the National Security Agency, and a host of other primarily military espionage services, as well as CIA assassination plots around the world. Johnson describes the political players and their pursuit of information, the abuses they discovered, and the remarkable reports they compiled, chronicling a litany of disquieting operations carried out against American citizens and foreign leaders in Latin America and Africa. With a new preface and postscript along with an updated chronology and appendix, this new edition revisits a moment of reckoning in the halls of power. The nation has now arrived at a time when the lessons of the Church Committee warrant special remembering.

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