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Trends. Warranted Dogmatism against the Closed Mind: Preliminary Look at the Intelligence Agency's (CIA) Groat Case

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According to a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) press release (No. 04-98), a former CIA employee, Douglas F. Groat, has been arrested as of April 2, 1998 on charges of espionage and attempted extortion. It is alleged that he disclosed information concerning the targeting and compromise of the cryptographic systems of two foreign governments to those governments and that he threatened to reveal intelligence activities and methods unless the CIA agreed to pay him more than half a million dollars.

According to The New York Times, the cardinal feature of Groat's personality that might account for his present predicament and past problems with other employers encompasses a nexus comprising his zealotry, his fanaticism, his rigid going by "the book"--even as his perception of "the book" might become more and more divergent from the actual book with time.

The psychological construct most similar to the Times description of Groat is that of dogmatism--popularized by social psychologist Milton Rokeach. Rokeach maintained that individuals high in dogmatism seemed to be very resistant to change even in the face of noxious consequences or disconfirming information. Moreover, high dogmatics, in contrast to individuals low on the construct have been much less likely to identify or seek to identify general principles in solving a set of problems and, instead, have opted for guidance from authorities. High dogmatics also have been less likely to analyze the content and implications of a message and have been more likely to depend on the reputation of the message's source and the attractiveness of the message's packaging. They have tended to perform more inadequately as problems become more complex or autonomous, while low dogmatics have performed more adequately. High dogmatics have been more resistant to changing specific false beliefs about human behavior. Compared with low dogmatics, they have seemed quite problematic on dimensions of adjustment, group behavior, and parent-child relationships.

Personality constructs often are too situationally dependent to contribute significantly to predictive validity of social behavior. As well, the construct of dogmatism may be psychometrically contaminated with measures of conservatism, authoritarianism, and fanaticism. Finally, social psychological constructs such as dogmatism may be lacking in cross-cultural validation to support generalization in the political sphere. However, a strong case can be made that not only is high dogmatism contraindicated as a security risk, but as an impediment to the analysis and evaluation of intelligence. (And this does not contradict an IBPP analysis (reference below) that fanaticism about certain ideological components may be adaptive.) (See Costin, F. (1968). Dogmatism and the retention of psychological misconceptions. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 28, 529-534; France and the role of the National Front: The psychology of fanaticism. (March 27, 1998). *IBPP*, 4(12); Francis, L.J. (1997). Personal and social correlates of the "closed mind" among 16-year-old adolescents in England. *Educational Studies*, 23, 429-437; Heslin, R., Rotton, J., & Blake, B. (1977). Confidence in information: Source and dogmatism effects. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 11, 227-236; Restle, F., Andrews, M., & Rokeach, M. (1964). Differences between open- and closed-minded subjects on learning set and oddity problems. *Journal of*

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Abnormal and Social Psychology, 68, 648-654; Statement by the Director of Central Intelligence. (April 3, 1998). 04-98; Vacchiano, R.B., Strauss, P.S., & Hochman, L. (1968). The open and closed mind: A review of dogmatism. Psychological Bulletin, 71, 261-273.) (Keywords: Central Intelligence Agency, CIA, Dogmatism, Douglas Groat, Espionage, Extortion, Psychology.)