INFORMED CONSENT
From the Body to the Body-Politic
in the Nuclear Age

by
Diana Hull, Ph.D.

Booklet 14
WAGING PEACE SERIES

NUCLEAR AGE
PEACE FOUNDATION
Peace through Informed Action
WAGING PEACE SERIES

As far as is known, the term "Waging Peace" originated with Warren Wells, late husband of Ethel Wells of Santa Barbara, in a letter to President Eisenhower. It was a longstanding practice of Mr. Wells to keep in close touch with key national figures and give them his views on peace issues as well as other vital matters. This series is dedicated both as a memorial to him and in gratitude to Mrs. Wells for her continued efforts in this cause.

Just as peace is more than the absence of war, waging peace is more than supporting arms reductions. In addition, it embraces positive steps toward genuine harmony. In this series the Foundation will distribute short booklets stressing ideas for attaining peace. Some publications will be scholarly, others more popular in style—most will combine elements of both. Concepts expressed will include views of many authorities, and will not necessarily be those of the Foundation.

Suggestions for topics and your reactions to this issue are welcome. Quantity lots are available at minimal charge from the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.

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INTRODUCTION

In this issue of Waging Peace, Dr. Hull suggests that the principle of informed consent is applicable to the relationship between government officials and citizens. She suggests that in the nuclear age citizens are entitled to a greater role in policy making than simply electing representatives. Citizens have a right to essential information and participation in security decisions which directly affect them. Government officials, like doctors, should be held to standards of full disclosure of relevant information, and face sanctions under law for failure to comply.

The nuclear age is not the time for half truths or disinformation. References to “missle gaps” which don’t exist, for example, have led to decisions both costly and dangerous which have fueled the nuclear arms race.

By shifting the context of informed consent from medical issues to national security issues, Dr. Hull has taken a creative leap that has the potential for changing the way government and citizens go about solving their joint problems in a nuclear age. We encourage your active participation in translating these ideas into policies which require greater candor by government officials, and increased involvement by all of us in the most critical decisions of our time.

David Krieger
President
Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
“The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential. This means that the person involved should have legal capacity to consent: should be so situated as to be able to exercise free power of choice, without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, overreaching or any other ulterior form of constraint or coercion....”

Principal One of the Nuremberg Code.

“The root premise is the concept, fundamental in American jurisprudence, that every human being of adult years and sound mind has a right to determine what shall be done with his own body.”

“There were about twenty men... all in exactly the same nightmarish state: their faces were wholly burned, their eye sockets were hollow, the fluid from their melted eyes had run down their cheeks... their mouths were mere swollen pus covered wounds...”

“At twenty megatons we are trying to imagine 1400 Hiroshima bombs detonated at the same moment at the same place.”

“In 1985, a coalition of community and national groups challenged a proposed MX deployment in Federal court in Lincoln, Nebraska (each MX carries 10 warheads). They argued that the deployment was illegal on the basis of international and constitutional law... and transfers from the congress to the president the constitutional power to declare war. The judge dismissed the claims, ruling that the questions raised were ‘political questions’ the courts could not decide.”

“Every human being has lost ultimate control over their own life and death. Who then is deciding the fate of everybody else?”

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The concept of informed consent was developed, and its practice made specific, by medical ethicists during the 1970's.¹ Until now its application has been limited to relationships, decisions, or procedures that take place in health care or in the laboratory. But as a human rights construct with legal implications, and as a moral philosophy, it can be applied to any relationship where one party, on the basis of a claim to superior knowledge, authority, skills or judgment, makes decisions or follows a course of action that risks the health or life of others.

The Nuremberg trials established in law the ascendence of ethical codes over the authority of governments. The obligation to refuse to commit reprehensible acts against others extends logically to the refusal to be a victim of reprehensible acts like nuclear war, or to permit such acts to be committed by the state as our agents.

Informed consent provides a way of dealing with danger to the physical body, but can be applied just as well to the body-politic. It is a singularly appropriate model for citizen-government relations in the nuclear age because never have those in positions of power exposed populations to such massive risks, and never has there been a greater duty to inform, or a greater obligation to obtain consent.

Medical Rights and Human Rights: Converging Paths

Respect for the autonomy of the individual, and the right to privacy are the moral and legal underpinnings of informed consent in medi-
The notion of consent is also at the heart of democratic government, and precedes by two hundred years the recent examination of consent in the context of medical practice and research.

The United States was the first modern nation that tried to make government a servant of the governed, and do away with the ideal of the "good monarch" who had the obligation to care for subjects. The beneficence model has also been a problem in medicine, and contemporary thinking identifies correctly the ways in which it can interfere with the patient as a free agent acting on the basis of good information in his or her own behalf.

Beneficence as a motivating force in public and private behavior has a poor record, and abuses in unequal relationships are more noteworthy than the success of voluntary altruism. Thus, the responsibility for the welfare of others is only appropriate when the cared for are very young or incompetent, and even a family relationship is no guarantee that those without power will have their interests safeguarded.

Although genuinely benevolent relationships have been more prevalent in medicine than in political life, it was the legal accountability of physicians that set the stage for a new ethic of patient's rights and the requirement of informed consent.

This concept has produced benefits that go beyond an increase in protection for both the giver and receiver of medical services. The requirement of informed consent, and participation in the protocols that make it work, have altered the passive stance of patients as they are required to evaluate alternative treatments, and take responsibility for the choices they make in health care. For doctors there are now guidelines that define full, truthful, and ethical behavior, and a body of probable risk data for almost every procedure that sets a standard for technical excellence.

The nuclear age is the time for all of us to insist on similar rights for ourselves as citizens, and on similar obligations from those who serve us in government.

To do this we can advance the loose philosophical notion of the consent of the governed to a more specific informed consent, where the steps leading to citizen compliance ensure that it is voluntary and autonomous, and based on truthful and comprehensive information. In the coming era of the informed consent of the governed, politicians, like doctors or engineers, in exchange for their privileges, will be held accountable for their professional performance and its results.

Neither malignant nor beneficent power is relinquished voluntarily, and the leverage that brings about shared control are personal penalties sufficient to discourage the making of decisions without the permission of those affected by them. Thus, the strict legal accountability of office holders will promote consent seeking.

Having or maintaining power is a motive in its own right, whether the ends are beneficent or not, and the special contribution of the American Constitution has been the attempt to see to it that the various branches of government, and the rights of states, check and balance each other. The most glaring exception to this division of power is the military authority of the federal government, which gives wide latitude to the executive branch and its various agencies. Once elected, the executive branch has been beyond the legal reach of the public in these matters, and there is no route through the courts at present that makes it possible for individuals to stop the government from taking risks in their behalf that they do not wish to take.

The Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy claims that nuclear
weapons and official U.S. policies concerning their use, violate fundamental principles of the Constitution, and undermine the Bill of Rights, whose very existence recognizes that "reasons of freedom and personal security" should prevail over "reasons of state." The Lawyers Committee also agrees with the criticism of many legislators that the President's authority to order first use of nuclear weapons deprives Congress of its right and obligation to decide when and if the country should go to war.

Until now it has been accepted that actions taken by the federal government for the alleged purpose of defense or national security cannot be legally challenged by citizens, and that the only way to force a change in policy is through the ballot at the next election. It has been assumed incorrectly that blanket consent is given at the polls for all governmental activities in these two areas, and that no further specific consent is required.

Representatives in the Congress, as well as citizens, can find their access to information, and the power to intervene limited in military and national security matters. Both groups now worry whether the president's right to conduct foreign policy covers equally the sending of marines to Grenada and the right to start a nuclear holocaust. This question focuses on the variation in the orders of magnitude of both risk and effects in the executive power to use our arsenal of weapons, and is the factor that has been ignored in the debate over appropriate congressional, executive, judicial, and citizen prerogatives. Without the direct consent of the people, all branches of government are overreaching when they are blind to the special circumstances of our time.

Because of nuclear weapons, new questions are being asked about the legality, as well as the morality of military activities that will violate the rights of civilians, nonparticipating countries, and future generations. Statements declaring an absence of intention to use nuclear arms are neither binding nor reassuring, but the fact that they are made at all acknowledges that there are now limits to what governments can do in actual wars, and threaten to do in wars of intimidation. The annihilation of an adversary's population, and self annihilation are not a legitimate objective no matter what the provocation.

A few lawsuits that test the right of the government to put us in this kind of jeopardy have gone to trial. It is brand new ground, and so far the courts have cut off attempts by groups such as the Center for Constitutional Rights to introduce a measure of democratic decision making into the nuclear arms race. But the issues can take years to shape, and lawyers have just begun to use their particular skills in the service of survival.

In this effort they will call upon a body of theory and international law that has a long history, establishing that "the means of injuring the enemy are not unlimited," and especially prohibiting "unnecessary suffering." These principals were set forth in the 1868 Declaration of St. Petersburg, and in the Hague Conventions of 1907. The Geneva Convention of 1949 "imposed detailed obligations on all belligerents to ensure the health, safety, and sustenance of civilian populations."

The Nuremberg trial decisions directly confronted the individual's responsibility to respect human rights in the face of coercion from the state. The defendants facing the International Military Tribunal in 1946, were charged with conventional war crimes, and with two other new categories of crime: crimes against peace, and crimes against humanity.

The results of these proceedings were not only to punish German leaders, but to forge a legal code that held individuals accountable for the atrocities they committed, and do away with the excuse that they
were just following orders. These decisions enlarged the western democratic tradition by insisting on personal moral autonomy.

Informed consent breaks new ground in the pursuit of self determination, as we are faced with both the possibility of committing atrocities, and the danger of being a victim of atrocities, in the nuclear age. Medical practice and laboratory research are an example of how a different kind of fiduciary research now insures that procedures and penalties are in place to promote informed choice. Because of this process there is also a shared responsibility for outcomes.

The judgment at Nuremberg was that neither national defense nor total war can excuse heinous acts, and that those who commit them, even under orders, are criminals. Forty years later, while we continue to search out and deport hidden Nazi's, we simultaneously permit our government to both threaten and prepare for making the whole world an instant Auschwitz.

Because we have knowledge that our government is preparing to use nuclear weapons, American citizens will be responsible for the catastrophes that will result from their use. We cannot evade this as many Germans tried to do by claiming that the gas chambers were hidden from their view. If we are responsible for the use of such weapons, we must also have the authority to prevent their use, and nobody, including our elected representative, can speak or act for us in those matters where we are individually accountable. Nobody has sought, nor have we given, our consent to use nuclear weapons.

The Government's Responsibility to Obtain Informed Consent

The legislation and the court decisions that define informed consent in medicine and in the laboratory, require continuing participation in decisions by patients and research subjects. There are standards of truthfulness that must be met, including a comprehensive disclosure of hazards, and an acknowledgment in writing from the patient or subject that the agreement to participate is preceded by knowledge about the full extent of the injury or damage that might result.

Federal policies governing medical research also prevent the government from putting us at risk as part of scientific experiments or untried technologies. Nuclear weapons research is illegal under this standard since neither the Congress nor the executive branch have fulfilled any of the most rudimentary requirements for obtaining the informed consent of citizens as human subjects during all of the experimentation, development, and preparations for the use of nuclear weapons.

The political doctrine of "consent of the governed" is the progenitor of consent in medicine. Now the same kind of mandated, specific consent required for taking chances with the life or health of those in the medical system is a necessary restraint on government activities more dangerous to human welfare than anything ever done or imagined in laboratory or in the operating room.

The risks that the American military are now requiring citizens to take transcend individual welfare, and encompass threats to future generations, the gene pool, and nature in the broadest sense. It follows that government has more than the ordinary obligation of full disclosure, and of an unbiased presentation of alternatives. Most critical are the measures to insure that any agreement to consent is preceded by an impartial and absolutely candid presentation of the dangers, and the establishment of procedures to make sure that they are understood. Nothing less is acceptable.
Instead, the task of alerting the public to the great danger, and pressing for information and understanding of what was at stake and what the alternatives might be, came from private groups and individuals, independent scientists and some ex-military. The government's initial response to this effort was a combination of lying, denial and moves to discredit the opponents of the nuclear arms race.

It is ironic that both the courts, and other agencies of the federal government itself, like the National Institutes of Health, and the Food and Drug Administration developed both the philosophical and operational foundations of informed consent, championing the right of the patient to know the harm that might conceivably result even from the most benign and low risk procedures. This occurred at the same time that other branches of the federal government were continuing their history of concealing the risks of nuclear weapons, and the intention to use them.

Consent in medicine is a stand-in, a preview, and proving ground for informed consent procedures in larger arenas of life. The evolution of the doctor-patient, and the research-investigator subject relationships are predictive of the changes that can be made when the insistence on complete information and self-determination is pursued.

Informed Consent in Medicine: How it Happened

A standard for disclosure by doctors, and participation in decisions by patients, was never made specific prior to 1960, so the prevalence of consent practices in clinical medicine before that time can only be inferred from old treatises on medical conduct.

The earliest writings about professional behavior, the Hippocratic Oath(s) discuss truth telling, but the patients right to know is not as compelling as the doctor's obligation to be beneficent and in control.10

The Hippocratic tradition was carried forward into the middle ages and beyond, and the historic literature supports the idea that benevolent dishonesty was proper professional behavior. A famous monastic physician is quoted by the medical historian Henry Sigirest as recommending, "if a canon is sick, tell him the bishop has just died. The hope of succeeding him will speed his recovery."11

The American physician Benjamin Rush, (1745-1813) broke with the past in advancing a more contemporary ethic, criticizing deception and emphasizing the education of patients and the importance of giving truthful and comprehensive information. But this was recommended to ensure compliance, and other of his writings indicate he was still in the authoritarian mold.12

Although Rush was a contemporary of Thomas Jefferson, he did not deal with the issue of consent, a concept he was surely very familiar with as one of signers of the Declaration of Independence. The idea of consent in medicine did not take its modern form until much later, in the second half of the twentieth century.

In tracing the history of informed consent, Faden and Beauchamp observe that obtaining the patient's confidence in order to ensure acquiescence, is very different from advocating consent or shared decision making. In their words, "It is a distant conceptual journey from confidence to consent—almost as distant as the beneficence model from the autonomy model."13

The barrier to patient autonomy had always been the presumed duty of the physician to decide what constituted the patient's best interest, and what course of action promoted that end. Barriers to
to enable an intelligent choice."

Self determination is further emphasized in the following passage, "The context in which the duty of risk disclosure arises is invariably the occasion for decision as to whether a particular treatment procedure is to be undertaken... it is the prerogative of the patient, not the physician, to determine for himself in which direction his best interests lie... to enable the patient to chart his course understandably, some familiarity with the therapeutic alternatives and their hazards becomes essential... It is evident that it is normally impossible to obtain a consent worthy of the name unless the physician first elucidates the options and the perils for the patient's edification."\(^{13}\)

Informed Consent in Research

While the executive branch of government, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Energy, conceal and legitimize the most unacceptable risk ever posed to living subjects, that "Final Epidemic"\(^{19}\) which will follow the use of nuclear weapons, the courts have so far evaded all challenges to the legality of these activities.\(^{39}\) At the present time, being entitled to truthful information and self determination depends on whether a person is in the role of a citizen, or in the role of patient or research subject.

Thus, the extent of the court's concern is determined by WHO is violating our right to be both informed and to give or withhold consent to be put at risk. Physicians and research investigators CANNOT violate those rights, but the Department of Defense CAN.

Meanwhile, other branches of the federal government continue to make protection of human and even animal subjects a paramount consideration. The National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Ad-

ministration, and even Congress and the Army, as early as 1960, developed stringent regulations to protect the rights of subjects. So it seems that the division of powers, while providing for checks and balances, also creates a nation with multiple personalities.

During the period 1974-1983, The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, and the President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine, and in Biomedical and Behavioral Research, wrote 17 reports and appendix volumes, finally analyzing informed consent into its components of information, comprehension and voluntariness.

So, although the early formulation of these protections was a result of lawsuits against doctors, it is in research, not clinical medicine, that informed consent has been mandated and monitored by federal controls and regulations, and through a system of prior review that has linked the funding of research to consent procedures.\(^{21}\)

The exception to this is the research conducted by the Department of Defense.

Nuclear Weapons as an Illegal Scientific Enterprise

The development, testing and manufacture of new weapons is no different than other experimental projects that create new substances, new instruments, or new techniques. It is properly subject to similar kinds of evaluation and review, and judgment by standards similar to research supported by other federal agencies or private institutions.

The primary considerations for the sponsors of all other research is whether a project has scientific merit, makes a contribution to knowledge, and is an ethical undertaking. The only justification for exposing
anyone to the possibility of serious harm, and for the outlay of time, talent, and money is the likelihood that the findings will lead eventually to an improved solution to a problem.

This kind of favorable outcome is the result of a good fit between objectives and the techniques used to achieve them. Increasing the lethality of nuclear weapons defeats rather than promotes the objective of national security by introducing a hazard greater than any problem the project was designed to overcome. Thus, the design is flawed.

No other research sponsored by government would be permitted to justify itself for the reasons used to justify the continuation of nuclear weapons development: i.e., that nuclear arms themselves are responsible for the fact that a nuclear catastrophe has not happened yet. (The same inability to discriminate between cause and effect, and two associated events convinces the smoker of fifty years that since he does not yet have lung cancer, cigarettes have been a preventative.)

The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki can be viewed as the pilot study, whose findings were that the ultimate weapon had been found. No continued development was indicated because no further practical or scientific purpose could be served. The proper conclusion at that time was that nuclear weapons should not be manufactured or used, and that the necessary follow-up was a concentration on containing proliferation. Indeed, this was the advice the military received from most distinguished scientists, and respected world leaders.22

The implicit hypothesis underlying the continuing effort to create larger and more destructive weapons is that threatening to eliminate life and its support system is the best protection from a competing political philosophy. Because this hypothesis is not scientifically credible, it was never stated clearly, and because military activities are shielded from intense scrutiny and peer review from those outside of the system, this absurd hypothesis and the reasoning that propelled it forward was not made explicit. Instead it started out, and remains today, hidden in the entangled and emotional language of enemies and ideology.

In violation of what is simply routine protocol in other research, competing alternative hypotheses for solving a problem, in this case political conflict, have never been outlined objectively, nor the case made satisfactorily for the choice of nuclear weapons versus other possible choices.

The danger of nuclear weapons has never been described fully and responsibly to those put at risk, and the destruction that can take place because of technical and human error does not have acceptable safeguards. There is no evidence of full disclosure to subjects, or efforts to insure comprehension. Instead, the government is guilty of concealment, and other unethical practices that in another scientific setting would result in the immediate withdrawal of funds.

This research is lacking in justification, flawed in design, can yield no new information, and is illegal because there is no procedure for obtaining consent, and none has been given. The unacceptable risks to subjects alone disqualifies it, as much as the overall absence of scientific merit.

Thus, the exemption from standard research practices granted to weapons work has been a serious error, resulting in enormous expenditures and in the threat of incalculable harm to millions, perhaps billions, of uninformed and unconsenting human subjects.
Suppose that faith in the threat of 'Mutually Assured Destruction as Savior' is misplaced?

Making decisions about nuclear weapons and nuclear energy is so awesome, it is a wonder that those who have the responsibility to safeguard others are not more chastened, more reluctant to sell us on a particular course of action, and more insistent that we take some responsibility ourselves. But instead of thoughtful exposition of alternatives, and appropriate restraint, the public has been subjected to the aggressive advocacy of nuclear technologies.

In a marketplace of competing merchandise, no one is confused about the motives of the sellers, but in dealing with our government as a vendor of ideas we lose our bearings and cannot appreciate the other choices that are withheld from view.

Governments in power are ultimately dependent upon our willingness to accept the network of concepts that support the idea of the nuclear deterrent, a course carried forward from one administration to another that now has a financial and administrative life of its own.

In obtaining citizen compliance with these policies, there are few effective rules about full and fair disclosure or restraints on undue persuasion. When compared with the relationship of patients and research subjects to the medical community, government is ethically primitive in its failure to go beyond compliance, and insist on authorization for its dangerous activities. So we have the paradox that small risks to a single individual require a higher standard of disclosure and accountability, and more care in obtaining consent than the risk to vast numbers and to the environment.

To transfer the concept of informed consent to the government–citizen relationship, elected officials, bureaucrats and even candidates for office will need to give up being salesman who promote their personal or party version of reality. Instead, mature governance is based on scientific objectivity, and rewards skills in the impartial appraisal and communication of complex data. A critical issue like nuclear weapons deserves a meticulously unbiased and public evaluation.

Educating the citizen to make the autonomous and informed choices they have every right to make, and the refusal to proceed without these conditions being met, would bring a new depth of meaning to democratic process. The best traditions of science, and the new ethical imperatives of medicine and research can change a government now adrift in hubris in our dangerous time.

THE AUTHOR

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NOTES

1. In 1971 The Department of Health, Education and Welfare published an "Institutional Guide to Policy on the Protection of Human Subjects." Informed consent was defined as the agreement obtained from a subject, or from an authorized representative about the terms and conditions of participation in an activity of the Department. The components of informed consent were: (1) a fair explanation of procedures, (2) a description of risks and discomforts, (3) a description of benefits, (4) disclosure of alternative procedures, (5) an offer to answer inquiries about the procedures, and (6) an instruction that the subject is free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation at any time.

2. The freedom to care for one's health and person is an activity that falls within the privacy right. Justice Douglas in Doe v Bolton, 410 U.S. at 211-13.

3. The idea that lawful government must be based upon the consent of the people is found in Plato, and was later developed by English political philosophers of the 16th and 17th century, particularly John Locke.

   "If the supreme authority be conferred on the magistrate by the consent of the people... then it is evident that they have resigned up their liberty of action into his disposition." Gough, Locke's Political Philosophy, 63, 1647.

   The first American use of the term reflects the influence of English philosophers. The pattern for later use is in the variations of the phrase in the Declaration of Independence.

   "That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Declaration of Independence, 1776

   "The fabric of American Empire ought to rest on the solid basis of the consent of the people." The Federalist, No. 23, 1787.

   "Resolved, that in our opinion, the true cause of the trouble in Louisiana is to be found in the fact that the people have no confidence in the present usurping government, which does not command their obedience, and which fails to give protection because it is not founded upon 'the consent of the governed.'" Appleton's Ann. Cyc.479/1, 1874.

   "The doctrine of the 'consent of the governed,' the doctrine previously enunciated by Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, was not held by him or by any other sane man to apply to the Indian tribes in the Louisiana territory which he thus acquired." Roosevelt Letters, II. 1401, 1900

4. The wishes of the governed are communicated to representatives who have agendas of their own which often take precedence over obligations to the governed. For a discussion of how and why lawmakers and bureaucrats make decisions to advance their own self interest rather than that of the public, see discussion by Nobel Laureate in Economics (1986), James M. Buchanan in The Calculus of Consent, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1962. These ideas are developed in later books and articles under the topic "Public Choice Theory" and most recently in Liberty Market and State, Wheatsheaf, 1985.

5. See "Statement on the Illegality of Nuclear Warfare," by the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, 225 Lafayette Street, N.Y., N.Y.

6. The eighteenth century philosopher Thomas Reid, in talking about intentional action said, that whatever a man has done without will and intention cannot be imputed to him, i.e. "what I never conceived nor willed I never did." American citizens believe that they themselves do not intend to incinerate millions, and want to believe that the government does not intend to use nuclear weapons either. However, any examination of the conditions of "intention" forces the conclusion that our government does indeed intend to use nuclear weapons because its activities meet all the logical criteria for intentionality, i.e., we have developed the strategy, tactics, plans and blueprints for the execution of the plan.


8. We wonder whether the military have advised the servicemen who sit at the consoles controlling initiation of a nuclear weapons launch that they will be personally responsible for mass murder.

9. The medical literature overflows with statements that subjects and patients are not qualified to 'really understand' that to which they consent. These statements imply that full autonomy is the only instance of real autonomy. In other words how short of the ideal of full understanding and full independence from the control of others does a decision have to be to qualify as informed consent. Insisting on complete autonomy, or complete understanding sets a different standard for informed consent than for decisions made in the rest of life where substantial understanding or substantial autonomy are the practical rule. From A History and Theory of Informed Consent by Faden and Beauchamp, New York: Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986.


13. Faden and Beauchamp, op. cit.


15. Former General Richard V. Secord, commenting on the Iran-Contra hearings in the May 28, 1987 *Wall Street Journal*, said that our inability to keep a secret makes us a dangerous ally, and that we seek to purge ourselves of the knowledge about life in a dangerous and disorderly world, since this knowledge seems to “conflict with the American aspiration to some higher morality.” Secord claimed that the basic rule of intelligence is that “if it is not necessary for a person to know something, then it is necessary for him not to know it.”


