

Panel Requests Names Of CIA News Covers

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The Senate intelligence committee has asked the Central Intelligence Agency for the names of American news organizations that provided cover for clandestine agents abroad, according to Senate sources.

The committee staff also has studied examples of past CIA covert operations and has requested the names of American reporters who worked either full-time or part-time in some of them.

Also under committee study are sources of funds for journalist traveling fellowships and possible CIA relations with national journalism organizations, or individuals employed by such groups.

Senate aides refuse to say whether CIA has given the committee any names of news organizations or individual journalists. Similar requests from the House intelligence committee were turned down by the agency, according to a House committee staff member.

The prospect that names of cooperating news organizations and CIA-paid reporters may emerge — plus repeated statements by CIA Director William E. Colby that the agency plans to continue employing part-time reporters (called stringers) — has created concern among journalists.

Complicating the picture, both for news organizations and the congressional committees, is the lack of information on exactly what use of the press the CIA has made.

According to House and Senate committee sources, the CIA appears to have had relationships with three types of reporters:

— Stringers, who work abroad part-time for American and foreign news organizations, have been used to gather information as CIA informants. Colby has said the CIA still uses some 30

stringers, but he refuses to reveal which news organizations they work for.

— Full-time staff members of general circulation American news organizations who also worked for CIA. In 1973, when Colby first disclosed this type of relationship to The Washington Star in a background interview, he announced the practice was being halted. He said recently that the last five of these had given up one or the other profession. Of the five, Colby said, three reporters had not informed their American employers of their agency relationship. The others worked for the CIA with the approval of their company management.

— CIA agents overseas who use journalistic employment as a cover for their clandestine activities but do not perform any journalistic work.

The House intelligence committee, in its unpublished report, noted that: "The CIA's cover and commercial staff files show that in 1975, 11 CIA employees used media cover with 15 news field companies — television, radio, newspapers and magazines. Five of these are of major general news impact, nine of no major general news influence and one a proprietary."

A CIA "proprietary" is a company secretly owned and operated by the agency.

The House committee never got the names of those organizations and thus does not know how many are American, and how many foreign.

CIA Director Colby told reporters Tuesday that no CIA personnel are operating abroad under journalistic cover for major American news organizations.

The Senate intelligence committee is looking at news organizations based on information that in the past the CIA has benefited from cover provided by American organizations.

A top news executive, who asked that his name be withheld, said recently that he knew of some organizations that had "let their names be used" by the CIA because they were owned by "super-patriots."

Executives of major U.S. newspapers, radio-television networks, wire services and magazines contacted all