

Overseas Cuts Spare Intelligence Men

By TAD SZULC

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 13—United States intelligence services—notably the Defense Department's agencies—have won exemptions for thousands of their personnel from an order by President Nixon to reduce by 10 per cent the number of American officials serving abroad.

Most of these exemptions cover the Pentagon's intelligence and psychological-warfare operations in East Asia, in which a total of 28,000 Americans are engaged.

The military intelligence exemptions, along with smaller ones for other Government agencies represented overseas, were granted by the White House despite State Department recommendations that a study of further cuts in intelligence operations abroad be undertaken "by leaders independent of the intelligence community under the aegis of the national policy level."

Among the major agencies,

only the State Department has fully accepted its share of the cuts—517 of 5,166 positions abroad.

Under Secretary of State Elliot I. Richardson—acting as chairman of the National Security Council's permanent committee of under secretaries, which was charged with carrying out the President's "Operation Reduction"—noted in a report to Mr. Nixon that under the Defense Department exemptions "the military psychological-warfare units" would assume "a disproportionate role in comparison to civilians."

The Richardson report, which has not been made public, was obtained from high Administration quarters.

President Nixon ordered "Operation Reduction," known in Federal jargon as OPRED, on July 9.

Mr. Richardson's report was sent to the White House on Oct. 3.

On Nov. 26, the White House announced that the President had ordered home

14,937 American military personnel and the elimination of 5,100 overseas civilian jobs held by Americans, 10 per cent of whom are Foreign Service officers.

This is to be effective on June 30, 1970 with a savings of \$50-million a year.

The White House said that the order excluded troops in Southeast Asia, South Korea and Berlin and those in Europe under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Subject to the cut in the military field, therefore, were the 144,889 Defense Department personnel, of whom 39,281 were civilians.

The total military strength of the United States abroad—is about 1.7 million.

In addition, the Defense Department employs 324,682 foreign citizens abroad. The Richardson group is to make recommendations by Dec. 31 on reducing foreign employees. Total employment of foreigners abroad by all the

Continued on Page 24, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 6

Government agencies is 351,694.

Strictly speaking, the Defense Department is working a 10 per cent cut in both its military and civilian personnel abroad. But the distribution of the cuts, left to the department's discretion, maintained abroad intelligence and psychological warfare personnel in numbers that the Richardson report considered as highly excessive.

On the other hand, the Central Intelligence Agency was reported to have reduced American personnel abroad by between 10 and 12 per cent. It is believed that the agency employs 30,000 foreigners abroad, directly or indirectly.

The Richardson report said that 20,000 Americans, mainly Defense Department personnel, are engaged in intelligence activities in East Asia.

Under its interpretation of a

July 21 directive to Mr. Richardson from Henry A. Kissinger, the President's Special Assistant for National Security, the Pentagon was able to exempt 12,000 of the 28,000 intelligence personnel in East Asia from the cuts. This meant that only 1,600 instead of 2,800 were sent home. Statistically, the reduction in the intelligence staffs in East Asia were only 6.4 per cent instead of 10 per cent.

Mr. Richardson's report commented that although the intelligence community as a whole had complied with the 10 per cent cut, he believed there were "intelligence activities which can probably stand further reductions without a real detriment."

The report discussed the feasibility of alternative systems of collecting intelligence following the closure or consolidation of some activities, including the establishment of mobile operations in the United States and "closely allied countries."

A joint C.I.A.-State Depart-

ment subcommittee was charged with the "reconsideration of the role of intelligence collection organizations overseas" operating under Washington's direct guidance or under foreign control points.

It was in this context that Mr. Richardson proposed the independent study of intelligence operations under "the aegis of the national policy level"—meaning the National Security Council.

U. S. A. Is Involved

The Richardson report further found fault with the Pentagon's insistence on maintaining the level of its psychological warfare operations in Asia. These are coordinated with the C.I.A. and receive "general policy guidance" from the United States Information Agency. The information agency's legal mandate, incidentally, does not provide for involvement in psychological warfare in war theaters.

These operations are chiefly aimed at Communist China, North Vietnam and North Korea and include radio broadcasts, leaflet drops and the dissemination of written pamphlets "through other means."

The Richardson report said, "In Southeast Asia and Korea, civilian agencies are reducing the level of operations, but the Department of Defense does not plan to reduce the level of psychological warfare operations."

"Since the policy trend is in the direction of reducing the level of psychological warfare operations in the area, it does not appear fully consistent with that trend for the Department of Defense to exclude its units from any reduction on the technicality of the White House directive."

"As a consequence of exemptions, the military psycho-

Defense Department Avoiding Cuts in Some Intelligence Units

logical warfare units will assume a disproportionate rule in comparison to civilians," he said.

Mr. Richardson then cited a number of examples of military and intelligence operations abroad that may be eliminated or reduced.

He urged the elimination of the Voice of the United Nations Command, radio station in South Korea run by the United States military.

Its liquidation has been recommended by the American Embassy in Seoul.

Mr. Richardson noted that 950 American employees, mainly military, operate a highly secret intelligence operation in

Ethiopia and that the Pentagon has exempted the entire staff, although "it is in our interest to reduce our profile as much as we can."

He said that there had been only 4 per cent reduction in two military intelligence stations in Morocco, where 1,700 Americans, chiefly military, are employed.

The Richardson committee also asked the Defense Department to re-examine the need for a separate unified command in the Panama Canal Zone, which has 12,000 Americans.

The report remarked that in 1967, the Panamanian Government only "with the greatest reluctance" agreed to let the

United States continue using the Canal Zone for military training and "liaison" with Latin America.

In addition to Panama Canal defenses, the command is responsible for planning and controlling "military contingency operations" in Central America and South America.

The special report due on Dec. 31 is to suggest alternatives, such as moving the command to the continental United States, presumably Florida, or to Puerto Rico.