

CIA Manipulated U.S. Press, Halperin Tells House Panel

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There was "deliberate CIA manipulation of the American press" in reporting of the assassination of CIA station chief Richard Welch in Greece two years ago, a congressional panel has been told.

"The CIA successfully exploited the murder of one of its station chiefs to set back efforts to bring the CIA under constitutional control," Morton Halperin told a House intelligence subcommittee yesterday.

Halperin, a onetime aide to Henry A. Kissinger when Kissinger was national security adviser, now is director of the Center for National Security Studies, which seeks to expose what it considers civil rights abuses by U.S. intelligence agencies. He testified at the subcommittee's hearings on CIA relations with U.S. news organizations.

Halperin also said that the CIA gave Time magazine "a propaganda document" against the late Marxist Chilean President Salvador Allende and gave The New York Times information to discredit a Greek expatriate.

CIA PRESS OFFICER Dennis Berend denied Halperin's allegation that the CIA called reporters and tried to blame the Welch assassination on Counter-Spy magazine for identifying Welch as a CIA station chief.

Rather, Berend said, the CIA was not confirming at first that Welch had been a CIA station chief, so it told reporters who asked only that Counter-Spy had said he was.

"It really troubles me," Berend said, "that to this day third parties can use that sad death against the agency, that they can testify to a congressional committee that we used that death in some way."

Berend said he could not comment on Halperin's other allegations because he did not know the facts.

LOUIS SLOVINSKY, director of public relations for Time, said the

magazine would have no comment on Halperin's testimony.

Halperin accused former CIA press officer Angus Thuermer of manipulating reporting of the Welch assassination in Greece by calling a number of Washington reporters and telling them Welch had been publicly exposed as a CIA station chief by the magazine Counter-Spy.

In fact, Halperin asserted, the assassins knew Welch was CIA station chief because of the house he lived in. Halperin said the CIA had warned Welch two months earlier not to live there.

"That the stories instead suggested that Counter-Spy was responsible for his death was the result of deliberate CIA manipulation of the American press," Halperin said.

He said the "propaganda document" the CIA gave Time magazine as a briefing paper accused Allende of opposing a free press and advocating violence, contrary to the CIA's own secret analyses.

Halperin also accused the CIA of giving the New York Times information from its files to discredit Elias Demetracopoulos, a former Greek newspaper editor who opposed the junta there and its U.S. support.

Halperin said alleged discrediting information was that the editor once offered to work for the CIA. He said that information came from the CIA's own files.