

# C.I.A. Cutting Personnel In Agency's Biggest Layoff

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1,000 Posts to Be Abolished

By SEYMOUR M. HERSH

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WASHINGTON, March 20—James R. Schlesinger, the new Director of Central Intelligence, has begun the largest personnel cutback in the history of the agency.

Unofficial C.I.A. sources esti-

ated that at least 1,000 — and possibly as many as 1,800 of the agency's approximately 18,000 jobs would be abolished by the end of the current fiscal year, June 30.

An official agency source acknowledged that what he termed a "reduction in force" — known in the Government as a RIF — was under way "on a very selective basis" to eliminate "marginal performers." But he would give no figures for the cutback.

No official announcement of the cutbacks has been made to employees at the C.I.A. head-

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quarters in nearby Langley, Va., creating much uncertainty there.

"This is the first place I've ever been in where all the rumors come true," one agency employe said. "You get a call and get an interview and that's it," he said, describing the job-elimination process. "No preliminaries and ceremonies. They just give the word." "Nobody feels safe," the source added.

### High-Level Shake-Up

In addition to the layoffs, Mr. Schlesinger has initiated a high-level shake-up of key management positions inside the agency, and is expected to continue his efforts to trim manpower and cut costs in other intelligence agencies, such as the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency.

He has reportedly been told by President Nixon to improve the efficiency of the nation's over-all intelligence operations, which costs more than \$6-billion a year.

The C.I.A. reportedly spends about \$602-to \$800-million annually, although it is not known whether all of the agency's costs for its extensive Southeast Asian operations are included in that estimate.

Intelligence sources acknowledged that there was much waste in the personnel structure of the C.I.A.

"There's a lot of fat and a lot of dead wood that he's getting rid of," one agency em-

ploye said. "I guess I'm for it as long as it doesn't include me."

Another employe complained that many of his colleagues "don't understand what the criterion is" for the job eliminations. "There's no hard data; no facts," he said, adding that a seemingly heavier portion of jobs had been abolished from management staff and the agency's Research and Development, situated in nearby Rosslyn, Va., was said to be particularly affected. The office is responsible for most of the agency's basic research projects.

### 'A Wringing Out'

The official C.I.A. source, however, described the cuts as being "across the board" and not limited to any specific office. "What's going on is not a mindless cutting," the source said, "but a real search for the minimal performers and a wringing out."

Those officers with low fitness reports would be among the first to retire, he said.

Unofficial sources said that an appeal mechanism had been set up for those employes who wish to challenge the decision to eliminate their jobs. Those who make such appeals, the sources said, face the prospect of immediate retirement should their efforts fail.

A former high-level C.I.A. official expressed surprise when told today of the large-scale personnel cutbacks ordered by Mr. Schlesinger. "The C.I.A. doesn't have RIFs," he said. "That's always been considered a security risk."

The only significant cutback

in the agency's history took place shortly after John J. McCone was named director in 1961 by President Kennedy, a few months after the aborted Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.

About 260 agents employed by the agency's clandestine service were eliminated then, the former official said, "and that was very carefully handled."

Some Congressmen serving on intelligence committees, while reluctant to speak for the record, applauded Mr. Schlesinger's cutbacks and indicated he would get full Congressional approval.

"I'm convinced that we're gathering a whole lot of information we don't need," one senior Congressman said. "It's been pretty hard to pull our horns in."

Mr. Schlesinger, who re-

placed Richard Helms early last month, has established a new intelligence research advisory committee inside the C.I.A. that is expected to monitor the intelligence activities of defense agencies closely.

The only major intelligence office in the Government that is expected to escape personnel cutbacks is the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence Research, headed by Ray S. Cline, a former high-ranking C.I.A. official. Mr. Cline's 300-man department has been authorized to request 100 more positions next year, and was allocated 30 new personnel spots in the current budget.

Some Government officials have urged that the State Department unit be upgraded in an effort to supply more independent intelligence judgments on critical questions.