

CIA Defends Rule on Use Of Reporters

By Walter Pincus
and R. Jeffrey Smith
Washington Post Staff Writers

In the face of growing criticism from American news organizations, CIA Director John M. Deutch yesterday insisted he would not rule out employing American journalists in secret intelligence operations where American lives are at stake or a weapon of mass destruction might be used.

"Directors of Central Intelligence must concern themselves with saving American lives first," he told the Senate intelligence committee when explaining how exceptions could be made to a 1977 regulation that prohibits using U.S. journalists or news organizations as cover for CIA operatives.

In his first extensive public discussion of CIA relations with the U.S. media, Deutch insisted, "My sympathy on this matter is very, very much with the journalistic community. . . . I understand its reason to urge no interference, no cooperation with the intelligence agency."

As a former provost of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Deutch said he understood the concern of journalists because "there are similar concerns by academics about their use in intelligence matters."

But when Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), the intelligence committee chairman, demanded specifics on when journalists might be used, the CIA director hypothesized that the agency might do so to gain special access when terrorists held U.S. citizens hostage or when a nation or group was contemplating use of biological, chemical or nuclear weaponry.

"I'm not prepared to say when exceptions would be granted," Deutch said, adding, "I do understand the general rule is never to use journalists."

The issue of the CIA's use of journalists arose last week when The Washington Post disclosed that since 1977, CIA directors have waived the regulation that prohibits recruitment of U.S. reporters or use of media organizations as cover. Yesterday, the Associated Press quoted former CIA director Robert M. Gates as saying that he believed exceptions were made on one or two occasions.



BY RAY LUSTIG—THE WASHINGTON POST

Director John M. Deutch said the CIA might use journalists in a hostage case.

Deutch refused to discuss any past use of journalists but said the chairmen of the Senate and House intelligence committees may have been informed when that happened.

Associated Press President Louis D. Boccardi said, "The ban on the use of journalistic cover should be absolute." Mixing the CIA's function with journalism, said Boccardi, "exposes our people all over the world to a level of danger that's extremely worrisome."

When Specter first raised the question with Deutch, the committee chairman said these kinds of intelligence activities "ought not to be undertaken" if journalists are to retain their unique status abroad. "Deutch will respond to our specific request to give us a standard for when they use journalists," he said.

During the hearing, Deutch also took issue with a prepared statement by Defense Intelligence Agency Director Lt. Gen. Patrick Hughes, which said there was only a dim prospect that Bosnia would remain a viable country when NATO forces withdraw. Deutch said that prospect "depends on what happens" before any withdrawal.

In an unusual move, Hughes's prepared remarks were withdrawn by the Pentagon after they were provided to the committee staff. But Sen. Bob Kerrey (D-Neb.) read some of them into the hearing record.

Deutch also commented on a wide range of intelligence community concerns and emphasized that in the CIA's judgment, "stability is threatened" in many regions of the world. In particular:

■ Deutch warned that North Korea's economy "is in a downward spiral that will be difficult to reverse,"

and said the stability of its society and its communist regime will eventually be "undermined" by these economic troubles.

■ He warned that Russian military forces are mired in a bloody, protracted conflict with Chechen military forces that "could spread to other parts of the Caucasus" region. With regard to upcoming presidential elections in Russia, he said that even if a hard-line government takes power, Russia will not be transformed "back into the Soviet Union" and its military will not regain its former strength.

■ Deutch confirmed published reports that the CIA has told policymakers about Chinese shipments of nuclear technology and M-11 ballistic missiles to Pakistan, as well as Chinese sales of anti-ship cruise missiles to Iran. With regard to the M-11 transfer, in particular, Deutch said there was "not terribly much" ambiguity about the CIA's judgment—a point of view directly at odds with State Department claims that the allegation remains unproven.

Deutch further said the Chinese government was "almost completely preoccupied" now with a transition to new leadership following the protracted illness of supreme leader Deng Xiaoping and with maintaining political control in the midst of continued economic liberalization.

■ Deutch said that although the Mexican government shared Washington's concern about the increasing production of drugs or shipments through its territory, Mexican anti-narcotics enforcement was not as strong or effective as Washington would like.

was
nat
hal
er
ne
pla
has
anc
cor
by
ces
ag
mu
col
me
the
eff
pe
ag
pc
ad
tr
ye
je
th
si
di
sy
■
tl
c
r
j
t
s
t
c
t
e
c
t
i