

CIA Policy on Journalists Draws Assent, Bush Says

5727/76
By Laurence Stern

Washington Post Staff Writer

CIA Director George Bush has said that his policy on the use of journalists for foreign intelligence operations had met with "considerable quiet understanding" by "a number of members of the Fourth Estate."

Bush made the statement in a letter to The Fund For Investigative Journalism, a Washington-based organization of journalists which had requested that he prohibit the recruitment and use by the Central Intelligence Agency of all journalists, including free-lancers, stringers and part-time editors and reporters.

The CIA director's May 21 letter was made public by the Fund in the wake of charges by the Soviet weekly Literary Gazette that three American correspondents in Moscow are working for the CIA.

Although Bush did not specify whose opinions he sought in the U.S. journalistic community, he recalled that he had enunciated his

new policy in recent appearances before the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the Overseas Press Club.

"I have also talked privately to a number of members of the Fourth Estate," wrote Bush. "Although not all of them are totally happy with the situation as it is, I have met with considerable quiet understanding."

"One top figure in the national media told me privately that he thought that after issuance of my statement, no more could properly be demanded of us."

In a statement issued on Feb. 11, shortly after he took over as CIA director, Bush announced that the agency would no longer enter into paid or contractual relations with any full-time or part-time news correspondent "accredited by U.S. news service, newspaper, periodical, radio or television network or station." There was no elaboration of what accredited means.

He also said that the agency would bring existing relationships with such jour-

nalists to an end "as soon as feasible."

However both Bush and his predecessor, William E. Colby, made it clear that the agency would still retain the services of free-lance and part-time journalists who did not fall into the category of those "accredited" to U.S. media.

The Senate intelligence committee, in a recent report on the agency's use of journalists, said that as many as 50 stringers, who are paid on the basis of articles written, were on contract as intelligence operatives.

The report also said that two full-time, accredited correspondents abroad had working relationships with the CIA as of last February.

While Bush did not name the journalists he consulted on his policy, he conferred with editors of The New York Times and executives of both CBS and the Westinghouse network shortly after his installation as CIA director. The three sessions were conducted privately during a visit by Bush to New York.