

11/8/74?

CIA men in Britain checking on subversion

By Christopher Walker

American fears about the crisis in Britain and the increase of Arab terrorism have led to a sharp rise during the past three months in the number of Central Intelligence Agency people in Britain.

Between 30 and 40 extra American intelligence men have been drafted to Britain since the present state of emergency was introduced, according to sources in London. Many of them are experts skilled in the use of advanced surveillance techniques.

The agents are understood to be employed by the CIA and by the National Security Agency. One purpose of their transfer has been to gather information on so-called "subversive elements" operating within the British trade union movement.

Mr Miles Copeland, a former senior CIA agent and expert in intelligence matters, said in London yesterday: "Rightly or wrongly, the top men in the CIA believe that the present spate of strikes in Britain has far more sinister motives than the mere winning of extra wages. They believe that the aim is to bring about a situation in which it would be impossible for the kind of democratic government you enjoy here to continue."

In addition to the complement of CIA men regularly attached to the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square, the extra men are thought to be operating inside a number of American civilian and military research and advisory offices in London.

According to Mr Copeland, who maintains close contact with the CIA, the increase of American security men in Britain is well known to British intelligence services and Scotland Yard.

Explaining the likely reasons behind the move, he told me: "In addition to superior technical competence with all forms of surveillance equipment, it is widely recognized that our agents have a freedom to operate in this country which your own intelligence services do not possess.

"We all know that practical considerations prevent people like MI5 from acting really effectively inside Britain. You are restricted and squeamish on your own territory from doing the type of things that really have to be done to track down terrorists and subversives."

An increase in CIA men in Britain at present would be in line with the policy the agency has followed in other countries throughout the world at times of domestic crisis. One of its chief aims would be to gather detailed

information about extremists and report to Washington.

If past practice is kept to, most of the information would be handed through the normal

Continued on page 2, col 3

CIA men operating in trade unions

Continued from page 1

channels to the British Intelligence services, who in turn would hand it on to the Government for action.

Mr Copeland continued: "There is no doubt at all that it (the CIA) has agents operating inside the British labour unions, but it is unlikely that they would ever be found out. They would be British nationals recruited by CIA case officers. The officers would have an overseeing role and collate the information."

"The CIA has been trying to convince the British for some time about the power of subversives within the unions. Any increase in their establishment here will enable them to make their point with more force.

The present state of Britain makes it a professional trouble-maker's dream."

In addition to worries about the delicate political situation in Britain, another reason for the drafting-in of extra intelligence men has been the growth of international terrorism, particularly the recent exposure of links between Arab guerrillas and the Provisional IRA.

The Americans are more worried than the British about the threat of Arab guerrilla attacks because they regard their nationals and American property abroad as prime targets. They are particularly concerned about possible assassination attempts against prominent men like Dr Henry Kissinger who often travel in Europe.

Over the past few months the CIA is understood to have increased considerably the number of agents employed to counter the possibility of Arab terrorism. For a number of reasons, the bulk of those sent to Europe have come to London rather than CIA stations in other capitals like Paris, Rome or Bonn.

An intelligence source said yesterday that if the men had been drafted straight to other European countries they would have been prevented by language difficulties from becoming immediately effective.

In addition the American intelligence services have close historical ties with their counterparts here, and it is recognized that the two work well together with mutual respect.

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Increase in CIA activity in Britain denied by United States Embassy

By Louis Heren

The American embassy in London denied a report in *The Times* yesterday that more agents of the Central Intelligence Agency had been sent to Britain because of the industrial crisis and the increase in Arab terrorism. It said there were no American intelligence agents in the United Kingdom gathering information on activities of the British trade union movement.

Such denials are generally automatic, and understandable. They do tend, however, to ignore what can be regarded as the legitimate activities of organizations such as the CIA.

To take Arab terrorism first. Clearly intelligence is vital if plots are to be uncovered and terrorists apprehended. Americans are prime targets, and the recent massive security operation at Heathrow airport indicated that something was afoot.

Most western security services cooperate with each other. In the circumstances, reinforcement of CIA stations abroad would be standard operating procedure.

There was similar activity when President Nixon ordered an investigation of the international drug traffic. He after-

wards commended the agency for its good work.

The report of an investigation into industrial unrest in Britain must have been embarrassing for the embassy, but it would be wrong to assume a sinister motive by the CIA. The object of the investigation, it was reported, was to acquire information of interest to most governments, especially governments of big powers.

The main function of the CIA is to provide and coordinate information for the National Security Council, on which the President depends for information and advice. It would be strange indeed if it did not provide, or was not requested to provide, information on industrial unrest here.

From Washington, Britain must now be beginning to look like a Central American banana republic. The most sentimental Anglophile there—and many can be found in the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia—must be wondering if Britain is still capable of running its affairs.

A civil war has been raging in Northern Ireland for years, with one side receiving assistance from Libya. After years of stop and go, we have yet to prove

capable of managing a modern economy.

Now it must seem that the Government is incapable of governing. Militant trade unionists are in direct confrontation with authority.

Seen from abroad, Britain could be moving into a pre-revolutionary situation.

The Administration must be deeply concerned, and not for sentimental reasons. The collapse of the British economy would almost certainly precipitate an international crisis, and at a time when Washington is ill prepared to mount a rescue operation.

In this situation, an accurate assessment is vital.

Union allegation: Allegations of widespread bugging of men prominent in British politics and the trade union movement were made last night by Mr Clive Jenkins, general secretary of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs.

Mr Jenkins said on a BBC television programme: "Somebody, somewhere is going in for a substantial amount of surveillance." There was a widespread feeling among union leaders, their staff, and some members of Parliament, that telephones had been tapped, he said. It had begun last July.