

John Marks

'Friendly' Secret Agents

J. Edgar Hoover never let the country forget the dangers posed by Soviet spies in our midst. But neither Hoover nor the men who followed him at the FBI ever warned that we had to fear the secret agents of our allies.

Indeed, in direct contrast to the vast resources the FBI devotes to countering the KGB and related services, the U.S. government has paid virtually no attention to the undercover operatives from countries including South Korea, Chile, Iran and Taiwan. As one knowledgeable official puts it, "The FBI's policy has been to follow the commies and forget the friendlies."

Yet, consider these examples of what allied secret services have been doing within our borders:

- South Korean CIA agents "have been able to carry out their schemes in the United States and to violate our laws with impunity," according to Donald Ranard, who headed the State Department's Korean office from 1970 to 1974. Ranard testified before Congress that the KCIA has both organized and broken up demonstrations in the United States; physically attacked Korean-Americans opposed to the Park Chung Hee regime; and covertly subsidized the Korean press in America. In addition, the KCIA has participated in attempts to buy the votes of American congressmen with secret cash payments and offers of female companionship. Last month, the Korean ambassador admitted that KCIA agents assigned here have "used goon psychol-

ogy and tactics," but said the guilty were now being sent home.

- DINA, the Chilean intelligence service best known for repression of human rights at home, actively operates in the United States. Its main function here apparently is to keep track of and to intimidate Chilean exiles who oppose the military junta. Chilean secret agents have frequently traveled to Miami in recent years to organize support for the junta in the Cuban-American community. Cubans who once received paramilitary training from the CIA have gone on to work directly for the

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junta. Prime suspects in the assassination here in September of former Chilean ambassador Orlando Letelier have exactly this background.

- SAVAK, the Iranian secret service, also keeps an active network of agents in the United States to monitor the activities of Iranian students and exiles, as the Shah of Iran publicly confirmed last month. SAVAK agents reportedly have used physical force against their opponents in their country. Iranian students here are so fearful of SAVAK's long arm that many wear masks to avoid being identified at demonstrations held to protest the Shah's dictatorial rule.

- Two State Department officials say

that Taiwan's intelligence service, while not nearly so activist as some of the others, operates among Chinese students in the United States and apparently has tried to disrupt the activities here of visitors from the People's Republic of China.

Most foreign intelligence operatives, like their brethren in the American CIA, use diplomatic cover and work out of their countries' embassies and consulates. About 25 per cent of Korean personnel here are actually with the KCIA—a percentage comparable to American CIA representation among State Department officials abroad.

In a letter earlier this year to Rep. Don Fraser (D-Minn.), the State Department took the head-in-the-sand position that it has no way to differentiate between real foreign diplomats and intelligence operatives. If State truly wanted to know, however, it would only have to ask the CIA, which keeps extensive lists of foreign spooks—both friendly and unfriendly.

The ostensible—and only proper—reason for the presence of friendly secret agents in the United States is for "liaison" with the CIA. Through this liaison, the CIA is able to exchange information and plan joint operations, although CIA operatives seem to prize the contact most highly for the chance it gives them to "penetrate," or recruit agents inside, the cooperating services. The CIA considers these liaison and penetration arrangements to be among its most sensitive activities, and it has generally been unwilling to jeopardize

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them by reporting information learned about the domestic wrongdoing of friendly services to U.S. law enforcement agencies. Although the CIA knew in 1970 about Korean President Park's personal role in a conspiracy to suborn members of the U.S. Congress, it took at least five years for the Justice Department to make a thorough investigation.

The CIA has a further incentive not to interfere with friendly intelligence operations in the United States because to do so might hamper its own activities overseas. In other words, if there were a crackdown on the KCIA or DINA or SAVAK here, those services or their governments might limit the operations of the large CIA stations in Korea, Chile and Iran. When in 1973 Korean Affairs Director Ranard initiated a probe of KCIA activities in the United States, he received a call from a colleague in the CIA who "expressed a concern that possibly the result of any pressure on the part of the State Department or . . . examination by the FBI of the activities of the Korean CIA might have some repercussions as to our own CIA activities abroad."

Like the CIA, the State Department has been reluctant to risk the displeasure of governments like Iran's and South Korea's. State's occasional protests over the years have been so mild as to have virtually no deterrent effect on the foreign secret services. Not until the Shah personally admitted that his secret police were operating here—as State had long known—did the depart-

ment even ask Justice to investigate. Similarly, the great furor over Korean influence-peddling in Washington in recent weeks has resulted in State's asking Justice to probe KCIA operations aimed against the Korean-American community.

The fact remains that KCIA, SAVAK and other friendly intelligence services have regularly been interfering with the civil rights of U.S. residents and resident aliens. Students and emigres from South Korea and elsewhere may not have a potent lobby in Washington, but they presumably are entitled to equal protection of the law.

The irony is that the Ford administration, which has flaunted its tough stand on "law and order," could quickly put an end to these foreign intelligence abuses. All it would take is for the President or Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to call in the ambassadors from the guilty countries and to make clear that their secret operations here had to stop. There might be some diplomatic strains and even some intelligence losses, but the countries involved are sufficiently dependent on U.S. support that they would probably have to obey. If somehow this sort of firm persuasion did not work, the administration could then expel the offending secret agents, whose identities are well known to our own intelligence agencies. And if the Ford administration is still reluctant to do anything about the friendly spies, then President-elect Carter would do well to put them high on his agenda.