

CIA general

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Discontent at CIA Unveils New Charges

By Walter Pincus
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The CIA, beset by controversies over its budget and the case of confessed spy Aldrich H. Ames, is facing a barrage of allegations of wrongdoing, unprofessional conduct and sex discrimination involving senior personnel.

At least seven CIA station chiefs have been removed from their posts in recent years because of unsavory personal or professional activities, according to current and former high-ranking CIA officials. Most were given other jobs and then permitted to resign, the sources said.

A station chief in Cyprus was returned to this country after it was discovered that he had stolen at least one valuable religious icon from a church he had illegally entered, the sources said. In another case, the chief of station in Peru was reassigned after he threatened his staff with a pistol.

These incidents are surfacing now as current and former CIA officials are voicing their discontent with what they see as the agency's increasingly bureaucratic nature and loss of direction in the Cold War's aftermath. The agency also is under pressure from Congress to reduce its budget, and un-

der internal and congressional review because of the discovery that counterintelligence officer Ames was a spy for Moscow.

In another controversy, a woman who was CIA station chief in an unidentified Caribbean country filed an unusual sex discrimination lawsuit yesterday in U.S. District Court in Alexandria.

The woman, who sued under the pseudonym of "Jane Doe Thompson," claimed that in 1990 she reported her male deputy for beating his wife, but her charges were never investigated and he was later promoted. She, however, became the target of a CIA inspector general's investigation instigated by the deputy, and later was denied a promotion, she alleged in the court papers.

Along with the "Thompson" case, the agency also is negotiating an administrative settlement of a class action sex discrimination case brought in the name of several hundred female employees of its operations directorate, the part of the CIA that runs clandestine collection and covert actions.

The women's case, which was filed in 1991, claims that there has been a systematic denial of promotional opportunities for female officers in the espionage side of the business.

"There has been good cooperation on this recently," according to Rod Boggs, executive director of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, which is handling the case. "I hope

"Jane Doe Thompson," a former station chief in a Caribbean country, is claiming the CIA discriminated against her because she reported her male deputy for wife beating.

we can resolve it without going to court," Boggs said.

A senior intelligence official, referring to the seven station chiefs who lost their positions, noted yesterday that running a CIA operation in a foreign country is a stressful task. "It is

of Questionable Conduct

not unusual for people to have problems, either psychological or related to suitability, and be recalled out," the official said.

There are close to 100 CIA stations in the world, and running one is the goal of most case officers. The chief of station controls officers who recruit agents and file reports. He or she also manages covert activities in the area and serves as the U.S. ambassador's main intelligence adviser.

One of the allegations in the class action suit is that often when women complained that they had been discriminated against when not getting promotions, "they were told they would have to go for a psychological evaluation," according to a lawyer, other than Boggs, who is familiar with the matter.

In the lawsuit by "Thompson," the former station chief alleged she was denied a promised promotion after a male CIA employee whom she would supervise in the new job stated that "he would 'not work for a woman.'"

After pursuing an administrative remedy for two years and being turned down, "Thompson" decided to sue in federal court.

Victoria Toensing, an attorney in Washington for "Thompson," declined to comment on the case. She was a deputy assistant attorney general in the Reagan administration, and is a

onetime chief counsel of the Senate intelligence committee. In court papers Toensing sharply criticized CIA lawyers for refusing to declassify some of her court filings.

A senior CIA official said he was aware of the "Thompson" matter, but said the agency would have no comment until the CIA lawyers could review the court papers.

The "Thompson" case has been the subject of some discussion on Capitol Hill. One congressional source said that as a result of the CIA inspector general's inquiry, "She received only a slap on the hands."

Other sources inside and outside the agency, however, said that the woman was "placed in limbo." Her career rise ended after she reported the wife-beating incident and challenged her superiors, they said.

Several current and former government officials said the handling of the Cyprus and Peru cases illustrated what is called "the old boys' network," a protective attitude taken toward some CIA employees who are either friends or relatives of longtime agency officials.

A source noted that drinking among the "old boys" is often known and accepted, while drinking by those outside that circle can lead to such individuals being called for alcoholism testing.