

U.S. Denies CIA Asked Czech at U.N. to Spy

12/30/60
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UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Dec. 29—A bizarre spy story unfolded today involving a Czech employe of the United Nations Secretariat who apparently tried to fend off an American complaint by protesting that the United States had tried to enlist him for espionage.

The employe is accused by the U.S. of having tried to obtain classified information for Communist Czechoslovakia from a member of a private American research institute dealing with scientific, political and military affairs.

Seemingly sensing that he was about to be charged, the employe went to U.N. Secretary General U Thant early this month and alleged that the Central Intelligence Agency had tried to recruit him to get information for the United States.

Thant, who was initially open-minded about the employe's story, took the allegation to the American mission to the United Nations and later discussed it with Ambassador Arthur J. Goldberg.

Doubts Cited

After seeing the American dossier, Thant was represented by U.N. sources as being in a quandary over whom to believe. Other sources said today, however, that Thant is disgusted with the employe and with the Czech government.

American officials denied categorically that any approach was made to the employe either by the CIA or by any other U.S. intelligence agency.

The employe is described as a family man in his early 30s who came from Prague last summer to join the United Nations as a middle-level civil servant not handling political affairs.

At the moment he is more or less in limbo. A decision on his U.N. status—whether he will be discharged, allowed to resign or reinstated—is expected within a few days.

An Eastern European source initially mentioned the inci-

dent to this correspondent in an apparent effort to set a diplomatic backfire. Citing the affair as an example of what he said was attempted CIA infiltration of the United Nations, he said that the U.S. had insisted that the employe be discharged but was trying to keep the matter quiet.

U.N. Hires and Fires

This, however, was contradicted by a U.S. authority who explained that any such demand would have been improper because hiring and firing is the prerogative of the United Nations itself.

The United States has not so far made a public issue of the case, this authority indicated, because of President Johnson's expressed wish to improve relations with the countries of Eastern Europe. Most recent instances of suspected espionage in the United Nations have involved employes from Eastern European countries, including several from the Soviet Union.

First of Type

Sources here were unable to recall any previous case involving a Czech member of the Secretariat, but noted that last summer the United States declared a member of the Czech mission to the United Nations persona non grata because of improper activities.

Approximately 30 Czech citizens are now on the roster of the Secretariat including Jiri Nosek, Under Secretary for Conference Services.

No American employe of the United Nations has been accused of such offenses since the McCarthy era of the early

1950s, when several U.S. citizens were discharged by the U.N. on grounds of disloyalty to the United States.

At root is the question of confidence in the impartiality of the U.N. Secretariat. Article 100 of the Charter stipulates explicitly that:

"In the performance of their duties the Secretary General and the staff shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the organization. They shall refrain from any action which might reflect on their position as international officials responsible only to the organization.

"Each member of the United Nations undertakes to respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary General and the staff and not to seek to influence them in the discharge of their responsibilities."