



By James K. W. Atherton—The Washington Post

At House intelligence subcommittee hearing, Chairman Les Aspin, second from left, chats with reporters Tad

Szulc, left, Ward Just, Joseph Fromm and Herman Nickel. The journalists testified on CIA use of correspondents.

## Journalists Doubtful on CIA Curb

Associated Press

Foreign governments will not believe the Central Intelligence Agency has truly abandoned its policy of using American correspondents for intelligence purposes, four U.S. correspondents said yesterday.

They also claimed the new ban, if carried out, will prove ineffective for that reason.

"Generally the [foreign governments] just assume any reporter is under the control of his government," Joseph Fromm, a U.S. News & World Report correspondent, told a House intelligence subcommittee.

Fromm and the other reporters said the CIA policy is a good one but told the legislators they see little point in Congress enacting it into law because some foreign governments would still suspect U.S. reporters.

Further, although they agreed the CIA should not be allowed to subvert reporters, the U.S. correspondents agreed in varying degrees that some

intelligence use of correspondents is needed.

"Obviously, we would like to see a free press in all societies," said Herman Nickel, a recent Time-Life correspondent. "But a free press does not exist in many countries so there might be a certain amount of value in countervailing propaganda."

Ward Just, a former Washington Post correspondent, said it is "an outrage" for U.S. intelligence to "buy up writers all over the world" to report CIA views. But Just said he was not sure a foreign reporter could or should be prevented from deciding on his own to do intelligence work.

Tad Szulc, a former New York Times correspondent, said he would not object to "more or less visible propaganda" efforts by U.S. intelligence.

Except for Just, the correspondents said U.S. intelligence agents can be knowledgeable and valuable news sources so long as reporters are care-

ful not to be used in planting false news stories.

Just said reporters should have little or nothing to do with intelligence agents because the reporters can't tell when they're being used or how.

"They [intelligence people] live in a different temperamental world than the rest of us and you have to be goddam careful when you get around them," Just said.

"Like the relationship between the mongoose and the cobra?" asked Chairman Les Aspin (D-Wis.).

"I dno' tknow which is which," Just said.

But the other reporters said intelligence sources are often the best so long as reporters watch out for intentional misinformation and double check the intelligence information when possible as they would any other.

"Naturally this involves judgment," Nickel said, "and since reporters are only human, some of the best of us get taken once in a while."