

CBS News Chief Used Probe to Bare CIA Tie

Combined News Services

Richard Salant, president of CBS News, says that areas of CIA contact with the CBS News Division were revealed by an investigation that he ordered last year.

Salant, who has headed the network's news department since 1961, said that the CIA contacts occurred in the 1950s and early 1960s and that in those cases of which he had knowledge, he stopped them. Salant's remarks were made in an interview last week while he was attending a meeting of CBS affiliates in Los Angeles.

Meanwhile, Sig Mickelson, president of CBS News before Salant, confirmed CIA contacts with the network. According to a report published yesterday, Mickelson, who Salant said had a role in the CIA contacts, said the contacts were made under implied instructions received from William S. Paley, chairman of CBS Inc.

Salant said he ordered the investigation because of recurrent reports of CIA penetration of the network. The probe revealed that it was standard practice for CIA agents to monitor the reports of CBS correspondents as they were filed to the New York and Washington offices, Salant said. The correspondents did not know that they were being monitored by the CIA, and the CIA agents listened to reports that were not aired as well as those that were, he said.

In addition, CBS reporters provided the CIA with out-takes of film footage, according to Salant. He said the agency was particularly inter-

ested in footage of riots and demonstrations from abroad so that they could identify participants.

It also was common practice at CBS to have foreign correspondents debriefed by the CIA.

In addition to the findings of his investigative team, made up of news division members Bob Schedule and Joe Bellin, Salant recounted his own personal contacts with the CIA. One week after he became president of CBS news, he received a cryptic call from a CIA representative in New York who, according to Salant, referred to the existing relationship between the agency and CBS and stated that "Mickelson" knew all about it.

According to Salant, "Mickelson clearly had known about those arrangements because the CIA called me and said they just wanted to continue the arrangement and Mickelson knows all about it . . . Mickelson is now head of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, so if you want to take a few jumps, it all hangs together."

Mickelson told The New York Times yesterday that he learned of CIA ties with the network in 1954 at a meeting with Paley and two CIA agents in the board chairman's office. "I didn't raise an eyebrow about cooperating back then," Mickelson said. "I assumed that in the cold war climate that existed all the networks were cooperating." Paley said through an intermediary that he could not remember the meeting to which Mickelson referred.

Newsday
5/29/77