

CIA Officer Retires, Will Defend Agency

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United Press International.

The Central Intelligence Agency said yesterday that David A. Phillips, chief of its Latin American operations, has taken early retirement to rally former intelligence officers as private citizens to defend the organization from outside attack.

Phillips could not be reached for comment at his Maryland home but a CIA spokesman said that a story in the Washington Star on Phillips' action was essentially correct.

It said Phillips, 52, a veteran CIA station chief in the Dominican Republic, Brazil and Venezuela, and for the last two years head of the Western Hemisphere division, told Director William E. Colby that he intends to organize an association of retired intelligence officers from all American services.

The story said Phillips sent an open letter to 250 former CIA officers, saying in part:

"As chief of Latin American operations, I have been deeply concerned about the decline of morale at Langley (CIA headquarters in Northern Virginia) and abroad. Snowballing innuendo, egregious stories and charges, and even honest concerns have presented us with

the basic dilemma of issuing either a general statement which reassures few but preserves security, or a comprehensive accounting which satisfies some but at the expense of operations and agents.

"Under the circumstances there is little doubt that thorough congressional review is the best, if not only, solution even though some leakage of sensitive details on foreign operations seems almost inevitable . . . our capabilities abroad are being damaged. More and more of our agents and friends—many of the fine people who cooperate on the basis of ideology—are saying thanks but no thank you. Friendly liaison services are beginning to back away from us. The Marchettis and the Agees have the stage and only a few challenge them."

Victor Marchetti and Phil Agee are former CIA agents who have written critical books and articles about the CIA. Marchetti's book was censored by the CIA before publication after court action. Agee wrote his book in England and said he identified every agent and CIA cover organization or cooperating party that he could remember. Most of Agee's service was in Latin America.