

CIA Defense Group Holds First Meeting

Intelligence Men Go Public

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The group, sitting on folding metal chairs in a carpeted and deeply air conditioned room by a swimming pool in Montgomery County, looked a little like a faculty meeting at a large, well funded college.

Yet, when members were asked to raise their hands and identify themselves, they showed that five, including one of the eight women present, had served in the wartime Office of Strategic Services (OSS), two with some branch of military intelligence and the rest with the Central Intelligence Agency.

The 53 people in the sales center at Summer Village in Bethesda Friday night were the nucleus of the newly formed Association of Retired Intelligence Officers, at their first organizational meeting.

They agreed at the meeting to drop the habits of their secret careers and go public to defend the CIA from its critics and to explain the need for secret U.S. intelligence services. They did it, some explained, because they felt that an honorable, necessary profession has been maligned in the current controversy over the CIA and that the agency itself has not done a good job of defending itself.

"I waws [annoyed] at the domestic spying operations stories by Seymour Hersh [a New York Times reporter] and by the lack of any answer," said John R. Horton, who was the chief of CIA's Eastern European and Soviet Division until he retired last month. He used a colloquial phrase stronger than the word "annoyed."

After the meeting — part of which was secret — participants said it had become apparent that a number of

their fellows were going to enjoy the chance to talk openly about their profession and their experiences.

The change to such openness did not seem easy for all of the people there, some of whom wore small, rectangular lapel pins with colored bars that identified secret intelligence medals.

They were assured that it was all right for the one reporter present to observe part of the meeting and had to be reassured that a bald, broad-shouldered man who was taking pictures was "an in-house photographer," a fellow member.

Horton worked on the founding executive committee of the retired intelligence officer's organization, known as ARIO, along with

David A. Phillips, the chief of CIA's Latin American Division until he retired last month, and three other men.

Phillips, who plans to supplement his retirement income by lecturing for fees and writing a book, had the idea for the association and is now its central figure.

THE ARIO has 236 members, Samuel Halpern, another retired CIA man reported to the meeting, and about \$4,000 in its treasury. Each of the new members, who responded to an appeal mailed to addresses from Phillips' Christmas card list of about 400 names, has contributed an average of \$6.35 more than the \$10 set for dues, Halpern said.

The ARIO members have

spent about \$300 in mailings and organization, have no offices or club house and intend to address clubs and meetings, and try to make reporters working on CIA stories themselves available to series and to colleges or universities interested in finding out about the secret business of intelligence.

"Our fundamental task should be to define, as candidly and openly as we can, what CIA is (and its intelligence activity) — and at least equally important — what it is not," says a statement of purpose read at the meeting.

Horton, Phillips, Halpern and others explained they will deny allegations of CIA misconduct when they have specific, personal knowledge to the contrary, without offering their own version, and try at the same time to explain the overall need for intelligence.