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F.B.I. Embassy Break-Ins Put at One-a-Month Rate

By Reuters

Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation broke into an average of one foreign embassy a month in recent years. Newsweek magazine reports in its latest issue. In one Arab mission they met Israeli agents already there, saluted and walked away, the magazine adds.

Newsweek says that F.B.I. agents broke into the embassies of Arab countries, Poland, Yugoslavia, France and Japan, stole a coding machine from the Czechoslovak Embassy and blocked a New York City police inquiry into a break-in at the apartment of a Soviet diplomat assigned to the United Nations.

The magazine quotes Justice Department and present and former F.B.I. employes as the sources of its information.

The bureau conducted about 1,500 break-ins of embassies and missions, criminal hideouts and headquarters of extremist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and the American Communist party, the Newsweek articles says.

"Embassy break-ins, averaging one a month by one estimate, were usually staged to get information that could help the National Security Agency break foreign codes," it adds.

The magazine says the agents were organized into groups known as "black-bag teams" or "black-bag boys."

"They dressed in suits and ties but did not carry guns, badges or credentials, the article adds and quotes a former agent as having said the agents had been told, "if you get caught, you're on your own."

The teams consisted of a locksmith, a lookout and one or two men to carry out the searches, Newsweek reports and adds that sometimes a "slugger" was sent along to intercept anyone who might discover a break-in while it was in progress.

Two sources reported, the article says that F.B.I. agents posing as garbage collectors has been in office.

smuggled an entire coding machine and a truckload of files from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Washington about 15 years ago, and were so excited they forgot to take the garbage. The F.B.I. filmed the result from a concealed observation point the next morning, Newsweek says.

"One of the funniest things you'd ever see was the film of the Czech deputy chief of security going to the Soviet Embassy with his hat in his hand," Newsweek quoted one source as having said.

"The Czechs couldn't even wire Prague to tell them what had happened. They had to go to the Soviet Embassy and use the Soviet machines."

F.B.I. Declines to Comment

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 20—An F.B.I. spokesman, Homer Boynton, said the bureau had "no comment" on the report of F.B.I. break-ins at embassies and missions.

Mr. Boynton said he could not add anything to the statement by the F.B.I. director, Clarence M. Kelley, at a news conference last week that the agency had in the past made "surreptitious entries" into various places, including embassies, since World War II.

All the information on the burglaries is being transferred to the Attorney General and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Mr. Boynton said.

Mr. Kelley said that the bureau's agents had committed the break-ins and burglaries to obtain "information relative to the security of the nation."

He added that "there were a few" such break-ins at embassies here after 1966 — the year that F.B.I. sources have previously given for the termination of the practice by J. Edgar Hoover, the bureau's late director.

Mr. Kelley said that he had not been asked to approve any break-ins in the two years he