

CIA Got U.S. to Drop Drug Case

Associated Press

The Central Intelligence Agency, contending it could be embarrassed if an agent stood trial on drug charges, refused to give federal prosecutors evidence for such a case, according to a Justice Department letter released yesterday by Sen. Charles H. Percy (R-Ill.).

As a result, charges in Chicago against Puttaporn Khrankhruan, a CIA employee, and another person were dropped the letter says.

Percy released the letter with the complaint that "apparently CIA agents are untouchable — however serious their crime or however much harm is done to society."

The case against Khrankhruan and Bruce Hoefft, a Peace Corps member in Thailand, involved a 1973 attempt to smuggle 50 pounds of opium into the United States, the letter from Deputy Assistant Attorney General John C. Kenney said.

Percy wrote the Justice Department to find out why the charges against the two men were dropped Sept. 18.

Kenney replied that after a series of meetings between Justice Department officials and John Greany, CIA associate general counsel, Greany "insisted that there were other considerations at stake and that the material sought by the prosecutors would not be turned over."

Kenney said Greany explained that if Khrankhruan went on trial, "the situation could prove embarrassing because of Mr. Khrankhruan's involvement with CIA activities in Thailand, Burma and elsewhere."

Since Khrankhruan would have been a witness in Hoefft's trial, the same circumstances existed for that case, he said.

Kenney said Greany "further advised the prosecutors that under no circumstances would the CIA turn over either to them or to the district court judge . . . any of Mr. Khrankhruan's reports made to his superiors in Thailand or in the United States."