

Spy agency uses airlines for clandestine activities

WASHINGTON — A former insider has charged that the Central Intelligence Agency has provided the President with the military wherewithal to wage his own private wars around the world and is geared to fight still new clandestine wars.

In a confidential memo to Rep. Herman

Jack Anderson

Badillo, D-N.Y., ex-CIA official Victor Marchetti makes these allegations:

The White House has used "vague phraseology" in the law to build up a vast military arsenal and paramilitary force. Past presidents have ordered the CIA to wage secret wars in Asia, Africa and Latin America without the traditional constitutional safeguards and congressional oversight.

The CIA "has bought and sold air transport companies all over the world "from the Congo to Nepal, so the President could mount paramilitary operations almost anywhere. Marchetti claims one such company, Air America, "has grown so large, owning more aircraft than most major U. S. airlines, that it was a source of embarrassment within the agency. A senior officer had to be assigned the full-time job of keeping an eye on George Dole (the founder) in the hope of cooling his fantastic business success in the Far East."

Southern Air Transport, a Miami-based firm, is also fingered by Marchetti as a CIA subsidiary. "The sole purpose for the existence of SAT," he asserts, "is that the CIA be ready for the contingency that some day it will have to ferry men and material to some Latin American country to wage a clandestine war."

Marchetti also identifies Rocky Mountain Air of Phoenix as "one of the more colorful companies owned by the CIA." This outfit specializes, he says, "in training and airlifting parachutists, ostensibly for fire fighting purposes." But he then points out that the CIA has no need of fire fighting capability "unless it is to put out military brushfires south of the border."

The CIA's "air capabilities, its warehouses full of unmarked military supplies in the midwest, a secret demolition training base in North Carolina, even a secret airbase in Nevada, and its connections with international arms dealing firms," Marchetti charges, give the President a formidable, secret warmaking capability.

A CIA spokesman acknowledged that Marchetti formerly held a position of trust at CIA headquarters. He resigned several months ago to write a novel, "The Rope Dancer," based on his CIA experiences. But he abandoned fiction recently to write a detailed background memo for Congressman Badillo, who has introduced legislation to restrict the CIA to intelligence gathering and to prohibit clandestine wars.

The Marchetti memo cites the CIA's operations in Laos as the most notorious ex-

ample of clandestine warfare. Years before the public had any inkling of it, the CIA was running a large-scale war.

Declares Marchetti: "Airports and huge supply bases were secretly established up-country close to the action. Arms and material were delivered by the boatload from the CIA's warehouses in the Far East and the U. S.

"Guerrilla chieftains were recruited to lead the Meos, who would actually fight the war for the CIA. The government of Laos was placated and finessed into turning things over to the CIA operators who would conduct the conflict.

"The chief of station — the CIA's top post in the field — during the crucial mid-60s, was —. His previous assignment had been Berlin, where he announced to the CIA contingent there upon his arrival that he intended 'to tear down that blankety-blank wall.' He was transferred to Laos before he had the opportunity to carry out his threat, in part because of his ferociousness.

"He has been succeeded by —, former chief of station in the Belgian Congo. When things grew quiet there, he once dropped everything for a clandestine foray into the French Congo in hope of tracking down Che Guevara.

"He failed. But his fellow operators a couple of years later eventually caught up with the revolutionary in Bolivia.

"These are the kind of men who have led the CIA in Laos, and the CIA has led the U.S. into another humiliating, inextricable international dilemma."

Footnote: At the CIA's request, we have omitted from the Marchetti memo the names of CIA operatives whose lives could be endangered. Otherwise, the CIA declined to comment on Marchetti's charges. Paul C. Velte Jr., who has just succeeded George Dole as president of Air America, denied that the airline is controlled by the CIA. Stanley Williams, president of Southern Air Transport, also denied that his airline was affiliated with the CIA. We were unable to locate an office in Phoenix for Rocky Mountain Air.

ODDS AND ENDS

The Republicans are passing out bumper stickers showing Sen. Ed Muskie, D-Me., breathing fire and beating on a desk. "Will Muskie Pique too soon?" asks the legend. The sticker has no imprint stating its origin, as campaign literature is required to display. But we tracked it down to the Republican National Committee. Explained spokesman Lyn Nofziger coyly: "We didn't think Muskie was a candidate," since he hasn't announced.

Assistant Defense Secretary Barry Shillito has started a one-man campaign to combat Washington's telephone paranoia. While many of his government colleagues secretly switch on recording devices or silently signal to their secretaries to listen in on conversations, Shillito engagingly asks his callers for permission to "put my secretary on the line so I'll know what we said."

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