

Business Pose by U.S. Spies Reported

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 27—A high United States official said today that more than 200 American intelligence agents were stationed abroad posing as businessmen.

He said that some were full-time intelligence operatives and that business enterprises providing them with cover received payments from the United States Government to defray the costs of running their offices.

Others function only part-time as agents, he said, and some of them have proved to be such talented businessmen that they were lured away from their intelligence positions and hired as full-time executives by the companies that had provided cover.

"We've lost some good ones that way," the official said. He added that some of the businessmen-agents had been "very valuable" as intelligence gatherers, while others had become "a pain in the neck," because they "spent only 10 minutes a day" on intelligence activity and the rest of their working day on business assignments.

Official Asks Anonymity

The official made the disclosure during a discussion of relationships between United States intelligence services and private American business.

The official, who insisted that neither his name nor his department be identified, said that the American intelligence services frequently sought specific information from businessmen, scholars and journalists. He indicated that some of the information was purchased while other items were acquired by "swapping" data useful to the other party.

He said that intelligence services, when seeking information from businessmen, always offered to guard the information from businessmen, always offered to guard the information from competitors.

In addition, the official said, the intelligence services participate sometimes in research-and-development ventures with private manufacturers to perfect technical equipment — "A better bug," for instance.

Finally, he said, in "very, very rare" instances, intelligence services had spent "non-appropriated money" — that is, money acquired from private sources.

The official asserted that United States intelligence services had not used funds from businesses for the last 10 years.

In this connection he pointed out that the Central Intelligence Agency had rejected an offer by the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation of \$1-million in September, 1970, to be spent in Chile to defeat the Socialist candidate for

the presidency, Salvador Allende Gossens. The offer was made to Richard M. Helms, who was then the Director of Central Intelligence, by the agency's former director, John A. McCone, who had become an I.T.T. board member.

The official stated that the C.I.A. was also "phasing out" its practice of having agents operate under the cover of being journalists.

Last year it was disclosed that the C.I.A. had maintained some 30 journalists on its payroll during the years since World War II.