

Anti-destabilization

By John D. Marks

WASHINGTON—Now that President Ford has publicly asserted that the United States has a right to “destabilize” foreign governments, other countries might consider whether to permit entry to America’s agents of subversion, operatives of the Central Intelligence Agency.

These people, after all, engage in covert activities that the Director of Central Intelligence, William E. Colby, recently admitted would be crimes if committed in this country.

Why should any sovereign nation stand for that sort of thing, and, more important, what can a country do to protect itself from C.I.A. attack?

Foreign governments could inform the State Department that employees of the C.I.A. and other United States spy agencies are not welcome and must be withdrawn immediately if the United States wishes to continue diplomatic relations.

Admittedly, Britain, Canada and South Africa would probably not expel the C.I.A. because the agency operates in these countries mainly to exchange intelligence data and maintain close liaison.

Similarly, the Soviet Union almost certainly would not want to expel C.I.A. operatives, since the United States would surely retaliate with similar action, breaking an unwritten rule that both powers have a right to spy on the other.

But allied and third-world countries that have no wish to infiltrate our Government or to “destabilize” our democratic institutions—as the C.I.A. did to Chile’s—might declare themselves espionage-free zones. They could make clear that their refusal to allow the operations of the C.I.A. (or K.G.B., or any other foreign intelligence service) should not be considered an unfriendly act.

Since all C.I.A. personnel are abroad on false pretenses, finding them in order to expel them would be a potential problem but one greatly simplified by the C.I.A.’s standard procedure of sending most of its operatives abroad as bogus State Department officers.

Over 25 per cent of the people who are listed as working for the department overseas are actually with the C.I.A. And by cross-checking two unclassified State Department publications, the Foreign Service List and the Biographic Register, most of the C.I.A. operatives, normally listed as Foreign Service Reserve Officers, can be distinguished from America’s real diplomats, the Foreign Service Officers.

While there are Reserve Officers who do not work for the C.I.A., those who do are conspicuous by incomplete biographical data, which usually includes long service in such vague-

sounding jobs as “political analyst, Department of the Army.”

Identifying American military-intelligence personnel abroad is even easier. In countries where there are no United States forces stationed, most of them are simply called defense attachés.

C.I.A. operatives under “deep cover”—primarily as American businessmen but also as newsmen, missionaries, and students—would be more difficult to spot than their “diplomatic” brethren, but a government could handle many of these by announcing that any corporation knowingly concealing a C.I.A. man would be subject to expropriation.

Certainly not all United States intelligence operatives could be discovered, but such tactics could seriously disrupt C.I.A. operations. Nevertheless, even the most determined and clever government could probably not stop the flow of secret C.I.A. funds of the type that President Ford has admitted were secretly paid to Chilean Opposition leaders and newspapers.

As long as there are citizens willing to accept the laundered C.I.A. funds, the agency will contrive ways to get money to them.

For example, in Greece the C.I.A. has over the years recruited thousands of political, military, police, labor, news media, and academic figures. Now as Greece restores democracy and moves away from America’s all-encompassing embrace, there is real fear in the Greek Government that the United States will act to stop what Washington policymakers perceive as a leftward drift.

While the Greek Government could probably identify and expel most of the C.I.A. operatives—60, according to one newspaper report—the many Greeks already in the C.I.A.’s employ would remain as potential fifth columnists to which the agency could provide assistance.

Perhaps the way for Greece to rid herself of the C.I.A.’s pervasive influence would be to declare a general amnesty for all citizens who are with the agency. If genuine forgiveness were promised in return for immediate cooperation, and stiff penalties promised for those convicted of staying on the C.I.A. payroll after the amnesty period, enough of the C.I.A.’s Greek contacts might provide sufficient information to enable the Government to start unraveling the agency’s extensive agent network.

The point is that foreign governments do not need to stand by idly while the C.I.A. attempts to “destabilize” them.

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