CIA News Service Reported

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Washington Post Foreign Service

LONDON — The Central Intel-
ligence Agency secretly cre-
ated a news service here. Forum
World Features, to supply po-
литical and other articles to
newspapers around the world,
according to knowledgeable of-
ficials.

The agency quietly closed
down the nine-year-old opera-
tion in April for at least two
reasons, these officials said.
First, they said, the CIA was
withdrawing from covert prop-
aganda activities of this kind.
Second, the agency is said to
have feared that Philip Agee
or some other dissident ex-
CIA officer would blow Forum
World Features' cover.

When it began selling arti-
cles in 1968, the service's
owner of record, according to
the officials, was John Hay
Whitney, former U.S. ambassa-
dor to Britain and chairman of
the International Herald Trib-
une. Early in 1973, Whitney
was replaced by Richard Me-
lon Scaife, who has held a ve-
riety of posts with the huge
Mellon interests in oil and
banking.

In New York, Whitney's
said he had "no comment on
the subject" of CIA involve-
ment in the news operation. A
thesis report to reach Scaife for comment was un-
successful.

Editors in London who
bought articles from Forum
World Features say that the
service was highly profes-
sional. Its day-to-day opera-
tions were supervised by
Brian Crozier, a well-known
British writer of right-wing
views. Crozier has denied that
the news agency had any link
with the CIA.

Crozier's clients recall only
rare attempts at what would
seem to be propaganda, thus
bolstering the service's credi-
bility. The editors said that
propaganda was apparent in
articles dealing with Vietnam,
where the service gave strong
support to the official Ameri-
can position.

Ian Wright, foreign editor
of The Guardian, recalled that
one slanted story from Forum
World Features did slip into
the paper in the 1960s. It re-
ported that Somalia had re-
ceived 150 Mig-17 fighter
bombers from the Soviet
Union. Wright, who was not
foreign editor at the time, said
that a few weeks later the
newspaper set the record
straight with an account of
Somalia's 12 Migas.

The disclosure of Forum
World Features' CIA paren-
tage was first made in Time
Out, a weekly that blends left-
wing political commentary
with an entertainment guide.
The link has now been con-
firmed by knowledgeable offi-
cials.

Time Out also published
what it now says was a copy of
an internal CIA memorandum
Discussing the news service.
Intelligence sources here have
dated that the text sounds au-
thentic.

The memo is addressed to
"DCI," probably former Direc-
tor of Central Intelligence
Richard Helms and appears,
from internal evidence, to have
been written in 1968. As
printed in Time Out, it says:
"Forum World Features Ltd.,
(FWF) is an international
news feature service located
in London and incorporated in
Delaware whose overt aim is
to provide on a commercial
basis a comprehensive weekly
service covering international
affairs, economics, science and
medicine, book reviews and
other subjects of a general na-
ture. In its first two years,
FWF has provided the United
States with a significant num-
counter Communist prop (sic)
and has become a respected feature service well
on the way to a position of
prestige in the Journalism
world. Begun as a commercial
entity in January, 1966, FWF
was created from the residue
of Forum Service an activity
of the Cong. for Cultural Free-
dom (CCF) from which CIA
withdrew its support in 1968.

Beneath the unsigned memo
is written in hand: "Run W.
knowledge and cooperation of
British Intelligence."

The handwritten line re-
reflects the ground rules un-
der which CIA operates here. Offi-
cials say that the agency,
which has a substantial staff
at the embassy in London,
largely performs a liaison
function, sharing information
with its British counterparts.
Forum World Features was a
special case, and in accord
with the convention, could op-
erate only with the blessing
and knowledge of the British
intelligence services.

Editor Crozier indignantly
denied in a telephone inter-
view that the news agency had
any link with the CIA. He
readily acknowledged that it
was an offshoot of a CIA give-
away news service, but in-
cluded that he had broken the
lie to the agency.

Crozier said he became di-
rector of Forum World Fea-
tures in 1965 when he was told
that Whitney had bought it.
Thereafter, he said, he strug-
gled to break the remaining
links to the CIA's Congress
for Cultural Freedom, and
succeeded in 1968.

He said that it was possible
that some of the free-lance
journalists from whom he
brought articles were in the
pay of the CIA. When asked
whether he knew there was
CIA money or support for the
service, he replied:
"Not to my knowledge." He
then hung up.

Crozier also insisted that he
had left Forum World Fea-
tures in June 1974. However,
documents here that were
filed with the Department of
Trade when the service closed
don April 29 list Crozier as the
"person running the business."

His deputy, Ian Hamilton,
also described the CIA link as
"a whole fabrication of rub-
bish." Hamilton says that
Scaife wound down the ser-
vie because it was running at
loss.

Like Crozier, Hamilton sug-
gested that he may have been
duped by what he called "paid
hacks" working for the CIA.

Undoubtedly, many of the
free-lancers — and perhaps
some of the editors — did not
know about the CIA sponsor-
ship.

In fact, Forum World Fea-
tures was very careful about
the writers from whom it took
copy. One American free-
lancer living in Britain sold
several articles to the agency,
but then was told it could buy
no more. "You have a Jewish
name," an editor explained,
"and our clients in the Middle
East would not like that by-
line."

A new home has been found
by both editors: the Institute
for the Study of Conflict.