

TIMES'S REQUEST REJECTED BY C.I.A.

FEB 13 1976

Paper Sought Information on News Organizations

NYTimes

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 12.—The Central Intelligence Agency has rejected a request by The New York Times, made last month under the Freedom of Information Act, for the names of American and foreign news organizations that have provided "cover" for American intel-

ligence-gathering activities over the last 28 years.

The agency said in a response received today to The Times's request that the information it sought was exempted from disclosure under the law because it has been classified as secret and would disclose "the identities of intelligence sources and details concerning intelligence methods" if made public.

The Times has 30 days under the information statute to appeal the decision by the C.I.A., but James C. Goodale, the newspaper's counsel, said in a telephone interview, "We're not going to make that decision today, adding that he wanted to study the agency's denial

Mr. Goodale also said that he wanted to examine a letter from George Bush, Director of Central Intelligence, to Arthur O. Sulzberger, The Times's publisher, in which Mr. Bush replied to a similar freedom-of-information request from Mr. Sulzberger for the names of any of the newspaper's present and past full-time or part-time employees who might ever have worked at the same time for the C.I.A.

Mr. Bush said that none of The Times's staff members were now being "used operationally" by the C.I.A., but he added that the agency's policy was "not to comment on pos-

sible agency relationships with stringers or part-time correspondents."

Newspaper stringers are reporters who are paid for individual articles they write, rather than on a salary basis, and who frequently work for several publications at the same time.

In the letter to Mr. Sulzberger, Mr. Bush gave his assurance that the C.I.A. did not attempt to influence the reporting of stringers who were also in its employ, and that what he called the agency's "very limited operational use" of part-time reporters associated with American news organizations was restricted to the collection of intelligence alone.

Mr. Bush's letter was dated Feb. 9, two days before his announcement that in the future, the agency would enter into no new relationships with stringers working for American organizations abroad, and would terminate those now in effect as soon as it was feasible.

The Bush letter did not list any specific grounds for denying Mr. Sulzberger's request for information, as is required under the Freedom of Information Act, and Mr. Goodale said today that he would have to determine whether the letter was intended as a formal denial before he decided what action to recommend in connection with it.