

The Pay Is Low but Motivation Is High

By BENJAMIN WELLES
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 1 —

The average recruit for the Central Intelligence Agency these days is likely to be around 26 years old, with an M.A. — and probably a Ph.D. — degree, command of at least one foreign language and “motivation.”

“We’re not interested in the man who just wants to make money,” said one qualified informant recently. “What really counts is motivation.”

This de-emphasis on salaries is, perhaps, just as well, informants say, for the starting wage for young officers in the nation’s secret intelligence organization is comparable to starting Government salaries in less exotic work, around \$8,000.

With diligence, ability and luck, however, the American secret agent can aspire to the salary of the agency’s director Richard Helms, which Congress recently raised to \$42,500 from \$30,000. Mr. Helms is not only head of the C.I.A. he is also the President’s personal intelligence adviser and the coordinator of all Government intelligence activities.

He presides, for instance, each Thursday over the meetings of representatives of the national intelligence community — the C.I.A., the State Department, the Defense Department, the Atomic Energy Commission and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He has, in addition, virtually instantaneous access to President Nixon.

‘Trickle’ of Recruits

The C.I.A.’s emphasis on motivation may largely account, informants say, for the fact that the agency accepts each year only a carefully screened “trickle” of recruits — men and women, single or married.

The number of employees and the agency’s yearly operating budget are closely guarded secrets, as is the number of recruits added each spring as the university year draws to a close. However, published figures of 15,000 employees at home and abroad and \$500-million expended annually have not been seriously challenged by those who know.

“We recruit about one out of every 10 applicants,” said an informant. “Each takes about 10 tests — general and specialized knowledge, physical and mental aptitudes, psychological and so forth. There’s nothing ugly about the tests; they’re thorough but routine. Some applicants drop out along the way and others are screened out.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, MONDAY, JUNE 2, 1969

Among C.I.A. Recruits

Recruiting for the agency has been conducted openly through about 200 university and college placement offices across the nation for the last 10 years, informants say.

In the last two years, however, as student feeling has mounted against the Vietnam war, the so-called military-industrial complex and the Establishment in general, the C.I.A. has adopted a deliberately low recruiting silhouette.

“We still arrange interviews with applicants on college campuses,” one source explained, “unless we get word that the local S.D.S. chapter or some other militant group plans to demonstrate.”

When campus disorders loom, he added, applicants are interviewed at C.I.A. offices (listed in local telephone books) in the Federal office buildings in the nation’s major cities, or at a local recruiting office at Arlington, Va., near the agency’s headquarters building.

Impact of Disclosure

Qualified sources recalled that public disclosure in 1967 of secret C.I.A. funding of the international activity of American students, labor and cultural activities had led to an order by President Johnson to cease such funding by Dec. 31, 1967.

“Funds were already being whittled down anyway and the cutoff has had very little impact on the agency’s work,” one source said.

While the agency still maintains a heavy curtain of secrecy over its activities, Mr. Helms, a onetime newspaperman, has in recent months authorized a policy of dispelling the public impression that it is an “invisible government”: toppling unfriendly foreign Governments, eliminating hostile foreign leaders, a law unto itself.

Recently, for instance, on Mr. Helms’s public recommendation, Col. Lawrence K. White, third-ranking official of the C.I.A., was selected as one of 10 officials to receive the 1969 National Civil Service League Award for outstanding public service.

Colonel White, a friendly, soft-spoken hero of World War II who joined the agency in 1947 after being invalided from the Army for combat wounds, was described by Mr. Helms in a letter to Mortimer M. Caplin, former Commissioner of Internal Revenue and now president of the National Civil Service

League, as “the principal architect of the agency’s management structure [who] having designed it . . . built it.”

“No man of C.I.A.,” Mr. Helms wrote, “has made a greater or what will be a more lasting contribution.”

The bulk of the agency’s work consists of gathering intelligence from radio broadcasts, from agents and other sources all over the world and then evaluating it for the President. One officer said, “We have enough intellectuals and specialists to staff a medium-sized college faculty.”

The C.I.A. and the Atomic

Energy Commission between them, he added, probably lead the government in the use of computers and data retrieval procedures.

‘Dirty Tricks’

By contrast, other sources say, the clandestine work or “dirty tricks” side as it is called inside the agency, plays far less a role than is popularly supposed.

“Every covert action, for instance, must first be authorized by a top-level White House committee consisting of the President’s adviser on national security affairs, Henry A. Kissinger; Under Secretary of State Elliot L. Richardson, Deputy Defense Secretary David Packard and Dick Helms himself,” an informant emphasized. “If there’s any disagreement the President makes the final decision.”

“Moreover,” he added, “James Bond to the contrary—absolutely no one is authorized, licensed, permitted or encouraged to kill anyone.”

Since the Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961, knowledgeable sources stress, complete disclosure of the agency’s activities, plans, personnel and budget is also made regularly to a small, hand-picked group of key Senators and Representatives who serve as Congress’s “watchdog.”

Not only has there never been a security leak, informants say, but the presence of the “watchdog” committee has also insulated the agency from Congressional pressures.

Those familiar with C.I.A. operations assert that the agency has never been penetrated, unlike its principal rival, the Soviet Union’s K.G.B., several of whose officers have defected to the West. C.I.A. security procedures, sources say,

are ultrastrict.

There are four major C.I.A. operating areas: covert operations, known colloquially as “dirty tricks”; intelligence col-

lection and evaluation; science and technology, and “support,” or administration.

In “covert operations”—sabotage, kidnapping, elimination of enemies, the infiltration of “illegal” espionage agents—some qualified sources believe that the Soviet Union has an edge. But experts here believe that the United States is far ahead of the Soviet Union and other Communist states in its methodical collection and analysis of global intelligence.

The Silent Summons

Specialists also believe that the C.I.A. excels its rivals in science and technology and in administration. The latter includes recruiting, training, communications, security, funds, medical attention—and retirement arrangements.

“The C.I.A., for instance, advertises in technical journals for qualified scientists,” said an informant. “The facilities are small but excellent and young

scientists often like to work with older men they respect. Lots of the work consists of miniaturization—like tiny radio transmitters that allow an agent to transmit fast, then get off the air before he’s detected.”

The agency’s emphasis on miniaturization has also benefited from scientific “fallout” from the space program. One of the most intriguing — and nonsecret — devices recently produced is a small gadget, the size of a match box, carried in a pocket. It vibrates soundlessly when the bearer is wanted by his colleagues on the telephone. He then calls his office.

“It works on the same principle as the beeper that doctors use when they’re wandering around hospitals, only it’s silent,” said one source. “It would be embarrassing, for instance, for a top C.I.A. official in church or at a party if he suddenly began beeping.”