

C.I.A. Trained Tibetans in Colorado, New

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 18—The Central Intelligence Agency set up a secret base in the Colorado Rockies to train Tibetan guerrillas in mountain warfare in the late nineteen-fifties, when there was an uprising against Chinese rule in Tibet, a new book discloses.

In the book, "The Politics of Lying," David Wise, the author, said that the agency began training Tibetan refugees recruited in India in 1958 in a deserted World War II Army base near Leadville, Colo. The operation continued into the early months of the Kennedy Administration, he said.

A spokesman for the agency said that there would be no immediate comment on the report.

Mr. Wise, the former Washington bureau chief of The New York Herald Tribune and co-author of "The Invisible Government," a 1964 book about the Central Intelligence Agency, wrote that the Tibetan training program apparently ended abruptly in December, 1961, six months after the Bay of Pigs fiasco and a few days after its cover was almost blown in an airport near Colorado Springs.

Delayed by Bus Accident

"Ironically, it was the snow and the mountains — the very factors that led the C.I.A. to select Colorado for the training base — that almost caused the operation to surface," Mr. Wise wrote. A group of Tibetan trainees were loaded aboard a bus at the Army camp for a 130-mile trip to a nearby airfield in Colorado Springs, where a large Air Force jet was waiting to quietly fly them out of the country before dawn.

"But coming down the mountain," Mr. Wise wrote, "the bus skidded off the road in the snow. As a result of the delay caused by the accident, it was daylight when the Tibetans arrived at the field."

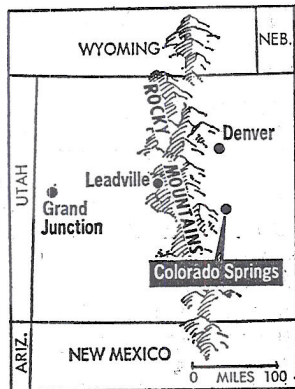
Once there, the book went on, overzealous military security officials herded the airport's employees around at gunpoint, but not until at least one of them saw the Tibetans board the jet.

Complaints to the local sheriff were made about the manhandling of the civilians, and a few newspaper articles describing the bizarre encounter were published in Colorado Springs and Denver. But, Mr. Wise wrote, the full implications of the incident did not become public.

When a reporter for The New York Times subsequently began a routine inquiry, based on a brief news-agency dispatch about the incident, the book said, the office of Robert S. McNamara, who was then Secretary of Defense, telephoned the Washington Bureau of The Times and asked that the story not be used because of "national security" reasons.

The Times acquiesced, Mr. Wise wrote, in line with the general newspaper practice in those years of not challenging the Government's definition of "national security."

The two top news officials in Washington for The Times in 1961, the bureau chief,



The New York Times/April 19, 1973

Camp reportedly was in Rockies 130 miles from city of Colorado Springs.

James Reston, and the news editor, Wallace Carroll, said yesterday that they did not recall the incident. Mr. Reston is now a vice president and columnist for The Times, and Mr. Carroll is editor and publisher of the Journal and Sentinel in Winston-Salem, N. C.

Jack Raymond, who was defense correspondent for The Times in 1961, said yesterday that "I do remember at the time knowing about the incident and I don't recall what prevented me from writing about it."

Mr. Raymond, who is now associated with the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies in New York, added in a telephone interview. "I'm inclined to think that I didn't have enough information about it to write a story. I have no immediate recollection of being thrown off the story by anybody."

'Nerve-Racking Moments'

In his book, Mr. Wise wrote that the issue caused some "nerve-racking moments" at the Central Intelligence Agency's new \$46-million headquarters in Langley, Va., because the incident occurred a week after President Kennedy announced the appointment of John A. McCone as the new Director of Central Intelligence. Mr. McCone replaced Allen W. Dulles, whose resignation was accepted after the Bay of Pigs incident, Mr. Wise wrote.

The dispute between Tibet and China began in the 13th century, Mr. Wise wrote, with China periodically claiming Tibet as part of her territory. Mainland China was taken over by Communist forces led by Mao Tse-tung in 1949, and in 1950 Chinese troops marched into Tibet.

In May, 1951, the Chinese signed an agreement with the Dalai Lama government for the occupation of Tibet, pledging not to alter the existing political system in Tibet or the powers of the Dalai Lama. However, the agreement also provided for Chinese control through the appointment of a military and administrative committee.

During the mid-nineteen-fifties, however, Mr. Wise wrote, Tibetan guerrillas began

insurgent warfare against the Chinese and officials of the Central Intelligence Agency "concluded that the situation offered an ideal opportunity" for covert United States aid.

In March, 1959, the Dalai Lama was forced to flee over high mountain passes to India after a Chinese mortar attack on his palace, Mr. Wise asserted. Intelligence officials later concluded, Mr. Wise wrote, that some of the guerrillas who had been trained in the Colorado Rockies had been responsible for guiding the Dalai Lama to safety.

Open warfare broke out in Tibet after the escape, Mr. Wise reported, and thousands of Tibetans were killed and the Dalai Lama's government was dissolved by the Chinese. India's decision to grant sanctuary to the Dalai Lama also increased the pressure between

that nation and China, the book said.

The secret training operation was hardly a success, Mr. Wise wrote, because the guerrillas "infiltrated into Tibet by the C.I.A. were attempting to harass the Chinese, not to free the country; in the long run it is doubtful that they made very much difference. Since 1961 Communist China has tightened its grip on Tibet." Tibet, like other areas largely populated by ethnic minorities, now has the status of an autonomous region within China.

"Would the nation's security have been endangered if the story of the Tibetan operation had been disclosed in 1961?" the book asked. "In the wake of the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy ordered two separate investigations of the C.I.A., and he struggled to take tighter control over the agency's opera-

Book Says

tions by changing its top leadership."

"Publication of the story might have focused public attention on a number of important issues," Mr. Wise suggested, "including the basic question of whether tax money would be used to finance clandestine intelligence operations." A second issue, he added, was whether the agency had a legal basis for operating a secret training base in the United States.

Finally, Mr. Wise wrote, that "disclosure might also have led to a public examination of such important questions as whether President Eisenhower approved the Tibetan operation, whether President Kennedy was aware of it or approved it, and whether the four 'watchdog' committees of the Congress had had any knowledge of what was going on in Colorado."