

Our Journalist-Spies

To the Editor:

Although C.I.A. Director William E. Colby may deserve some credit for reviewing and scaling down the practice of paying corruptible American newsmen to serve aboard as undercover informants, he needs to be told by the White House, the Congress, the press and the public that the whole dirty business must be brought to a screeching halt.

American journalists often obtain information and confidences from public figures and private citizens in other countries precisely because they are assumed to be independent of their Government, unlike newsmen of totalitarian countries. They are trusted. They are not known to be stooges for master spies.

It has now been revealed, however, that the C.I.A. not only induces journalists to break faith with their professional standards but further poisons the press by giving a journalistic "cover" to some of its operations.

Such procedures undermine public faith in the integrity of the press and threaten both the credibility and effectiveness of every honorable American newsmen, whether staff correspondent or freelance writer, working and traveling abroad.

DONALD S. CONNERY

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