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C.I.A. Aide Quitting to Defend Agency

The Washington Star

WASHINGTON, March 21—The chief of Latin American operations for the Central Intelligence Agency is resigning effective May 9 to organize former United States intelligence officers in an effort to defend the organization against those who attack it.

David A. Phillips, 52 years old, recently informed William E. Colby, Director of Central Intelligence, that he intended to take early retirement and organize an association of retired intelligence officers from all United States services.

Mr. Phillips has been in charge of the C.I.A.'s Western Hemisphere division for two years and has been the agency's station chief in the Dominican Republic, Brazil and Venezuela. The Washington Star learned that Mr. Colby told Mr. Phillips he would like him to stay but accepted Phillips's decision with goodwishes when it was made clear that the decision was final.

Mr. Phillips told The Star that he was particularly determined to defend the agency as a private citizen, as he could not do while on the agency payroll, because much of the recent criticism of the C.I.A. has focused on his area of responsibility in Latin America.

The agency has been linked with operations against the Marxist regime of the late President Salvador Allende Gossens in Chile and allegations of assassination plots against Prime

Minister Fidel Castro of Cuba, the late President Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Mocina of the Dominican Republic and the late President François Duvalier of Haiti.

The Association of Retired Intelligence Officers does not yet exist, but Mr. Phillips has sent an open letter under that heading to 250 former C.I.A. officers with whom he is acquainted. The letter says in part:

"As chief of Latin-American operations, I have been deeply concerned about the decline of morale at Langley [C.I.A. headquarters] and abroad. Snowballing innuendo, Egregious stories and charges, and even honest concerns have presented us with the basic dilemma of issuing either a general statement which reassures few but preserves security, or a comprehensive accounting which satisfies some but at the expense of operations and agents.

"Under the circumstances, there is little doubt that a thorough Congressional review is the best, if not the only solution even though some leakage of sensitive details on foreign operations seems almost inevitable. A few of our older documents from the cold war period will make for pretty heady reading today. As for our present activities, I am convinced we have no problem.

"In the meantime, our capabilities abroad are being damaged. More and more of our

agents and friends—many of them fine people who cooperate on the basis of ideology—are saying thanks but no thanks. Friendly liaison services are beginning to back away from us. The Marchettis and the Agees have the stage and only a few challenge them."

Victor Marchetti and Philip Agee are former C.I.A. agents who have written critical exposes of the agency.

Challenge for Debates

Mr. Phillips said he was leaving the agency because he wanted to fill the gap and intended to challenge Mr. Marchetti to a series of college campus debates. He will also go on a lecture tour and do some writing to explain why the United States needs an intelligence service.

Mr. Phillips said he was concerned that people might think he was still working for the agency when he gets started with the association's efforts. He said, "I wish to make it absolutely clear that the C.I.A. management has not had, and will not have, a hand officially, unofficially or otherwise in this organization and its efforts."

Mr. Phillips said he would receive \$15,000 a year as a retired employe compared with his present salary of \$36,000. The association, he said, will be financed by \$10 a year dues to be used for stamps, paper and similar expenses but not for salaries. He expects to provide for his own income through lecture fees.