

A Drug Case And the CIA

Washington

The federal government dropped drug-smuggling charges against a Central Intelligence Agency informer and a Peace Corps volunteer for fear a trial would compromise secret spy agency operations, the CIA said yesterday.

Senator Charles Percy (Rep-III) released a CIA letter and memorandum in which the CIA detailed its role in the case involving the smuggling of 50 pounds of opium into the United States from Canada.

Percy wrote the agency after assertions that conspiracy charges against Puttaporin Khramkhruan, a paid CIA informer, and Bruce Hoeft, a Peace Corpsman, were dropped because the CIA refused to cooperate.

Assistant CIA director Carl F. Duckett denied in the letter that the agency refused to cooperate.

The charges were dropped because Khramkhruan's defense undoubtedly would have demanded production

of information about intelligence sources and methods—including identities of employees, agents and continuing operations — and such information could be obtained without ending those operations and destroying the usefulness of those employees and agents, Duckett said.

He said the charges against Hoeft were dropped because "Khramkhruan, a necessary witness, could not have been made available without exposing the same information . . ."

Khramkhruan was hired by the CIA in 1969 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and "began reporting on narcotics trafficking in northern Thailand in July, 1972," the CIA said. He was paid \$144.58 a month, the agency added.

In July, 1973, Khramkhruan admitted to U.S. Customs agents that he had "been actively engaged in shipping narcotics" to the United States and named five others as participants in the smuggling scheme, including Hoeft, the CIA memorandum disclosed.

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