

CIA Agents Are Playing in a Rough League

Paris

While violating the American understanding of the limits of espionage activities, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency is not a maverick in the shadowy international fraternity of the world's major spy networks.

CIA involvement in assassination plots, domestic surveillance and exported subversion as disclosed by the U.S. Senate appears to fall within the normal rules of the game as it is played by the world's most powerful espionage agencies, a survey by Washington Post correspondents of the British, French, West German, Soviet and Chinese services indicates.

Ranging in size from France's 2000-member official spy agency to the Soviet Union's vast KGB apparatus of half a million, foreign cloak-and-dagger organizations appear to play the game at least as roughly as the CIA.

The publics they serve or spy for do not appear to be as easily shocked by intelligence-style dirty tricks as the Americans are. The major foreign services come out of societies with long histories in

which Byzantine conspiracies are assumed to be an integral part of public life.

The major agencies of the Old World have all been quick to use the dagger when their interests were threatened. Each of the Western spy agencies considered has a history of straying beyond its legal charter and of indulging in domestic spying, which is one of the KGB's principal tasks in the Soviet Union.

The size of the dirty-tricks bag each service has employed in disrupting or overthrowing foreign governments seems to vary with the money and manpower available to it as well as with the economic and strategic importance of the country targeted for action.

British intelligence stage-manages coups, burglars safes, blackmails the vulnerable and practices many of the curious arts that the CIA investigation has brought into public view, Bernard D. Nossiter reports from London.

"We know very well that men who go into this domain are not little angels," says a Frenchman

once deeply involved in his country's dirty tricks sector. "And we would not want them to be. They would be worthless against the kind of enemy we must all fight."

The other major services have managed to keep their cloaks in place much better than the CIA has. None have been subjected to the rough public questioning and disclosures that have made the CIA a major public issue in the United States.

There have been internal investigations and purges after intelligence scandals broke into the open in Britain, France and West Germany, but they have been handled inhouse for the most part.

The West German public and Parliament appear to have higher tolerance of questionable activities by its agency, the BND, Michael Getler reports from Bonn. The generally conservative tilt of the adult population and the country's unique geographical position on the front line with Communist Eastern Europe dampen the desire for the kind of public review undertaken by the

U.S. Senate.

In France, the dirtiest tasks have been given to strongarm groups outside the government framework and, according to critics, outside of government control in many instances. This has provided comfortable insulation for French leaders from the nastier aspects of the craft, but it has also led to repeated scandals and the involvement of the country's intelligence groups in drug smuggling, blackmail and gangland murders.

Britain appears to have strong governmental control over its Secret Intelligence Service. Foreign Office advisers sit in on discussion of covert operations and must give their approval.

In the Soviet Union, the question is not just whether the government controls the KGB, but also whether the KGB controls the government.

The Soviet agency is not just another instrument of the state, as the CIA clearly is. It is an integral part of the way the country is run, Peter Osnos reports from Moscow.

Its agents and informers have infiltrated every sphere of Soviet life, including the top levels of the government.

Political assassination appears to be a far more commonplace tool in international espionage than the American reaction to the CIA's involvement in plotting against Patrice Lumumba and Fidel Castro would indicate.

Smaller countries, with fewer resources and narrower security margins in which to operate, appear to resort to political murders even more often than the major powers.

Israel's Mossad has tracked down and assassinated more than a dozen Arab operatives and Palestinian leaders outside of Israel in the past three years.

Arab secret services are more often used to murder their own. Iraq, South Yemen and Morocco have ordered domestic political opponents assassinated at home and abroad, as has non-Arab Iran.

With the exception of West Germany, which focused its earli-

est destabilizing efforts on Eastern European Communist nations, the other major services have joined the CIA in making the weak states of Africa, the Middle East and Asia the world's main espionage battleground. Latin America appears to have been left as a CIA preserve.

Britain has made a specialty of smoothly depositing incompetent tribal sheikhs in the Persian Gulf to preempt successful leftist revolutions against them. During the rule of Charles de Gaulle, France toppled or preserved with relative ease the governments France itself had installed in its former colonies in Africa.

Britain and France were acting within the power spheres created by their colonial mandates and usually to protect important economic and strategic interests ranging from petroleum deposits in Abu Dhabi to large French air bases in Chad.

The Chinese, H. D. S. Greenway writes from the Far East, seem to concentrate on defensive operations against the Soviets and even seem willing to cooperate with the West in this endeavor. *Washington Post*