

Agents

CIA to Use Newsmen

Washington

The Central Intelligence Agency plans to continue to employ as agents more than 25 journalists or other representatives of American

news organizations, according to the Senate select committee on intelligence activities.

The committee revealed yesterday that those persons were not

covered by a public pledge made in February by CIA Director George Bush that the agency would stop hiring correspondents "accredited" by American publications and other news organizations.



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Former CIA director

The disclosure was published in a section of the committee's report on foreign and military intelligence activities entitled "Covert Relationships with the United States Media."

The committee did not identify the journalists involved or their organizations, but a staff member said privately that many of the individuals are in executive positions of American news outlets.

The panel recommended enactment of a law precluding the agency's "operational use" of any person regularly involved in writing, editing or setting policy for United States media organizations.

It said it was "concerned that the use of American journalists and media organizations for clandestine operations (was) a threat to the integrity of the press."

The committee did not deny the value to this country of the dissemination of propaganda abroad, but it observed that in this time of sophisticated mass communications systems, there is no way to prevent such propaganda from influencing American citizens at home. The agency is prohibited by its charter from engaging in domestic propaganda.

The report cited many instances in which the efforts of CIA agents acting abroad as journalists were printed in domestic publications.

The committee said it was aware other countries made use of "the international media" for propaganda purposes and that the U.S. public was not insulated from such efforts. The strongest defense against propaganda, the report said, is a "free and vigorous" press.

The most effective way to respond to the use of such propaganda abroad, the report added, is to permit American journalists to work "without jeopardizing their credibility through covert use of them."

Among the examples noted by the committee of work by agent journalists were the following:

- A book about China written by an agent was reviewed in the New York Times by another agent. The committee did not identify the book or the reviewer. A committee source said the reviewer was an academician and not a staff member of the Times.

- The agency paid \$170,000 a year for publication of a magazine in South Vietnam in 1974 and 1975. The South Vietnamese Embassy distributed the magazine to Americans, including all members of Congress.

- Two news services maintained by the CIA in Europe were subscribed to by major American newspapers. According to the report, "the CIA made a senior official at the major United States

daily aware that the CIA controlled these two press services."

- The "Penkovsky Papers," a book purported to be based on the reports of an executed Soviet spy, was actually written by CIA agents. It was published in the United States by Doubleday and Co. in 1964 and became a commercial success. The report said the publisher did not know of the agency's involvement.

In most cases, the report said, American news organizations were not aware that contributors were CIA agents.

In 1973, William Colby, then CIA director, halted the secret use by the agency of five full-time journalists with major American publications.

In February, Bush announced that: "Effective immediately, the CIA will not enter into any paid or contractual relationship with any full-time or part-time news correspondent accredited by any U.S. news service, newspaper, periodical, radio or television network or station."

Bush's statement was interpreted in many quarters as meaning the end of the agency's use of news media personnel. However, the committee disclosed in its report that "of the approximately 50 United States journalists or personnel of United States media organizations who were employed by CIA or maintain some other covert relationship with it at the time of the announcement, fewer than one half will be terminated under the new CIA guidelines."

The pivotal word in Bush's statement appears to have been "accredited."

The committee said the agency interpreted the word as applying to individuals who are "formerly authorized by contract or issuance of press credentials to represent themselves as correspondents." Thus, executives who do not work as correspondents are apparently not covered by Bush's directive, nor are free lance writers who are not affiliated with a specific employer.

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