



More on the CIA

John Barkham

IT HAS BEEN open season on the CIA for several years now. Watergate and its attendant scandals have cast a baleful light on what was once the top secret agency headquartered at Langley, Va. Since the retirement of Allen Dulles its directorship has become a revolving-door operation, with yet another new director about to take over in this highly specialized field. This could be what the CIA needs after it has been pilloried so publicly and protractedly. Time will tell.

"The Night Watch" is by a former CIA Chief of Latin American Operations, David Atlee Phillips, who retired last year after 25 years' service. It was a premature but voluntary retirement (he was 52) so that he might organize a group known as the Association of Retired Intelligence Officers. The aim of this group is to separate fact from fancy in the public's conception of the CIA.

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"THE NIGHT WATCH" should go a long way to correct the horror stories circulating about the supposedly omnipotent, omnipresent, even clairvoyant CIA. "The company," declares Phillips, is none of these things. It is an intelligence gathering agency and probably the best in the world. Nor is his new organization another arm of the CIA functioning under a phony name.

Phillips writes informally and entertainingly as though recalling for

friends the highlights of his service. He isn't bitter over the leaking of CIA data to the press since he understands the power of the First Amendment. He does, however, icily denounce the ex-agents who published the names and addresses of CIA operatives abroad, thus endangering their lives. The free-speech line, he intimates, has to be drawn at the point where lives are at stake.

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PHILLIPS is not a blanket defender of the CIA. He admits errors where errors were made. He agrees that after Watergate the Congressional investigations of the CIA were salutary, but strongly opposes any proposal to abolish the CIA.

Phillips recounts the inside story of the Bay of Pigs fiasco in great detail. The operation against Castro's Cuba was begun in the closing months of the Eisenhower Administration, but was left to a reluctant Kennedy Administration to execute. The plan was progressively whittled down until it was bound to fail — and did.

Despite the "inside" revelations in the book, Phillips displays the caution that is built into every CIA agent. He uses mostly pseudonyms for agents but real names where it doesn't matter. He tells good stories about such familiar figures as Allen Dulles, E. Howard Hunt, William Colby, Vernon Walters, Richard Helms and others (Atheneum; \$9.95).