

JAN 5 1978

CIA's Use of Press— New Claims Offered

Washington

The Central Intelligence Agency told its field offices to use damaging material from CIA files to discredit U.S. critics of the Warren Commission report on President Kennedy's assassination, Congress was told yesterday.

Morton Halperin, who was a National Security Council aide to former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, said CIA documents showed that the material dealt with the critics' political views.

He said the papers, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, did not explain why the CIA felt obliged to attack the commission's critics.

Theories about a possible CIA connection with the Kennedy shooting were investigated by the Senate Intelligence Committee three years ago, but the panel reached no conclusion.

Halperin, now director of the private Center for National Security Studies here, was testifying before the House of Representatives Intelligence Oversight Subcommittee, which is holding hearings on the CIA's relationship with the press.

Halperin said: "The CIA sent a dispatch to some of its field offices directing them to take action where there was discussion of the John F. Kennedy assassination to discredit and counter the claims of American authors challenging the results of the Warren Commission report.

"The cable provided a list of themes to be used and directed the stations to employ propaganda assets to answer and refute the attacks of the critics," he declared.

He added: "The material, to be used in attacking the books, contained information about the political activities and views of Americans from CIA files..."

Agency documents, he said, also showed the CIA once gave Time magazine a special briefing on political developments in Chile as part of its efforts to block the election of Marxist candidate Salvador Allende as president.

"As part of the effort to prevent

Allende from coming to power or remaining in office, the CIA spread the word through its media assets that he would abolish freedom of the press in Chile," Halperin said.

Halperin noted that the Senate Intelligence Committee, in its report on CIA involvement in Chile, had said the briefing "resulted in a change in the basic thrust of the Time story on Allende's September 4 victory and in the timing of that story."

A third incident, Halperin said, involved the CIA's attempt to use the American press to pin responsibility on the media for the murder of CIA agent Robert Welch in 1974.

He said the agency had warned Welch, its station chief in Athens, that he risked assassination unless he moved to another residence because the CIA station chief's house was well known to many in the city.

But he said the CIA's assistant director for press relations in Washington, in background briefings to reporters, claimed that disclosure of Welch's identity by an underground magazine, Counter Spy, led to the CIA agent's murder.

"That the stories (appearing in the U.S. press) suggested that Counter Spy was responsible for his death was the result of a deliberate CIA manipulation of the American press," he said.

Reuters