

Watergate and the Russians

CIA Spy Who Blabbed

Washington

A tale of a drunken and despondent CIA agent sitting down with a Soviet KGB operative somewhere in Latin America and telling him what he knew has emerged as a result of a Senate Watergate committee inquiry into the activities of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The KGB combines Soviet internal security and foreign intelligence functions.

A report issued by the Watergate Committee Tuesday contains a cryptic mention of a "W. H. flap" that highly reliable sources said yesterday resulted from the conversation and its ensuing effect on many of the agency's clandestine operations.

The initials "W. H." are

CIA parlance for western hemisphere.

The agent clearly provided information of value to the Russians, because the CIA's deputy director for plans later told the Watergate committee, according to its report, that the affair "threatened to compromise Western hemisphere operations."

The CIA man was described by sources as "despondent," "disgruntled" with the agency and, in his cups, in the time of his brief, and perhaps unprecedented, contact with the Russians, a little more than two years ago.

It could not be learned what specific information the American imparted and

the sources said yesterday that the matter is still considered extremely sensitive.

One of the lesser agency secrets compromised in the conversation, however, was the fact that a Washington public relations concern, Robert R. Mullen & Co., had for years been providing "cover" for CIA agents stationed abroad.

According to the Senate report prepared by the Watergate committee's minority staff, the Mullen concern has maintained a relationship with the Central Intelligence Agency since its incorporation in 1959.

At the time of the Watergate break-in on June 17, 1972, one CIA agent in Singapore and another in Amster-

dam were said to be representing themselves as "overseas employees" of Mullen.

A number of other American multinational companies with interests in western Europe or the Far East have traditionally furnished such "cover" for CIA operations, according to intelligence sources.

The agency was reluctant to say outright that the company's cover had been breached, according to one source, because of its desire to conceal from the Russians its knowledge of the clandestine contact between the Russian agent and the CIA man, who has since retired from the agency.

New York Times