

CIA

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Ex-Spy to Give Detailed Account

By Laurence Stern

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LONDON, July 10—Philip B. F. Agee is an ex-spy who is coming out of the cold with what is likely to be the most detailed account of covert Central Intelligence Agency operations ever compiled by an American intelligence officer.

The 39-year-old former CIA case officer, who hopes to remain in seclusion in a remote stretch of English countryside until his book is published, has finished a 200,000-word manuscript at which he has labored since he resigned from the CIA in 1969.

Agee's credentials as an officer in the clandestine ("dirty tricks") service of the CIA have been confirmed by authoritative sources in Washington. The CIA itself refuses to comment on any aspect of the case but officials are reported to be deeply concerned about Agee's prospective revelations.

In the course of an afternoon-long interview at his modest seaside hideaway Agee spoke guardedly of his eight years of covert operations against "unfriendly" governments and insurgent political forces. It was a world of manipulation of agents, news media, public officials, and military establishments through the classic espionage techniques of bribery, blackmail and mass propaganda.

In agreeing to talk to a reporter for The Washington Post, Agee withheld specific details that are in his manuscript which he felt might jeopardize his physical security before the book makes its appearance sometime within the next year. He did, however, make these points:

- During a brief assignment at CIA headquarters in Langley in 1966 he set up the Mexico City "cover" operation for the CIA, conducted under the front of the Robert Mullen company, a Washington-based public relations firm that has figured prominently in the Watergate case. It was his involvement in the Mullen cover, established for a CIA operative engaged in anti-Soviet operations, which led last week to the surfacing of Agee's identity. CIA fears that Agee would publicly disclose the Mullen arrangement in 1972 led to its closing by the CIA and the "Western Hemisphere flap" alluded to in the report last week of Sen. Howard Baker (R-Tenn.).

In Mexico, Agee's cover was as the Olympics staff assistant to then-Ambassador Holton Freeman. In his Olympics role, Agee's covert mission during 1967 and 1968 was to "meet all kinds of people" in order to extend the Mexican CIA station's network of agents.

- While serving in the CIA's Ecuador station in 1962 Agee participated in the launching of a pressure campaign against the Arosemena government to end diplomatic ties with Cuba. "President Arosemena didn't want to break relations but we forced him,"

Agee related. "We promoted the Communist issue and especially Communist penetration of the government." Eventually Arosemena fell and was replaced by a military junta.

- Agee personally served in 1964 as a conduit for funneling \$200,000 in Chilean currency from a major New York City bank into covert election support activities for Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei. Frei won. Agee handled the cashing of the check in Montevideo, where he was then assigned to the CIA station, and conversion into Chilean currency which was then sent on

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by diplomatic pounce into Santiago, he related. There was in 1964 a major covert program on Frei's behalf. Agee said that the United States also poured an estimated \$20 million into the 1962 Brazilian election in support of several hundred candidates for gubernatorial, congressional, state and municipal offices.

The CIA operates in close coordination with an international network of trade union confederations and national labor groups which Agee said have proven to be effective instruments of political influence in Latin America. In Ecuador, Agee said, he served as a CIA case officer for a local branch of the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), which was founded in the early 1960s as an affiliate of the AFL-CIO. He cited AIFLD, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, its Latin American subsidiary, ORIT, the Public Service International (comprised of government employee unions) and the various international trade secretariats as having given strong support to CIA-directed covert political programs.

The trade union organizations as well as other mass groups coordinate with the CIA chiefly through the international organizations division, which was in the center of the controversy over CIA funding of student, labor and cultural organizations seven years ago.

Agee last week was mentioned in press reports as having told his secrets to the KGB in a fit of drunken despondency. The Washington source responsible for the story later denied its authenticity.

Agee insists that he has never talked to the KGB, although he acknowledges that he intends to demonstrate in his book that the CIA has served as "the secret police force of American capitalism."

The former agent said he had made three trips to Cuba since 1971 to conduct research for his book and, as he put it, to witness the results of a "successful socialist revolution."

The Cuban trips were arranged by a Paris publisher who first contracted to publish Agee's book. One of the terms on which he went to Cuba, Agee said, was that he did not want to be debriefed by the KGB.

Agee's ideological break with the CIA and U.S. policy in Latin America started during his 1963-1966 assignment to Uruguay where his official mission was to direct operations against the Cubans and build up local security forces.

It was in Uruguay, which was an advanced welfare state by Latin American standards, that Agee said he lost his faith in the possibility of solving the region's problems through piecemeal reform.

Agee, who is under contract at present with British Penguin book publishers, said that his account, written in diary form, names numerous case officers, agents and particular episodes gathered from firsthand experience in the field. Such a narrative has never been published on the American clandestine services and Agee is apprehensive about the possibility of injunction action against him such as was taken against Victor Marchetti on his book, co-authored with John Marks, "The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence."

In 1971 when he had embarked on the book project and was living from hand-to-mouth at a secret location in Paris, Agee said he came under surveillance by a pair of Americans who befriended him and advanced him small amounts of money. Agee said he determined to his certainty that they were retained by the CIA to find out the contents of his book.

The CIA, he said, first became aware of his intentions to publish the critical book after he wrote a letter to a Uruguayan political journal suggesting that the 1971 election there would be subject to CIA infiltration. In December of that year he received a visit from a former CIA colleague who tracked him down in Paris through French police connections.

Within several months, Agee said, he was in regular contact with the two Americans who professed an interest in the book and a desire to see the manuscript. It was to his new-found "friends" that Agee confided, after the first burst of Watergate publicity in the newspapers, that the Mullen organization was providing cover for the CIA in Mexico. The Washington public relations company was identified in early stories as an employer of Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr.

Agee's "friends" in turn sent word to the CIA, as he reconstructs the events, that he might disclose the Mullen cover in his book. This was the origin

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of the "WH flap" alluded to in Baker's report.

Agee found himself in the remarkable position of having created the Mullen cover and having been responsible for "blowing" it five years later by divulging his awareness of it to agents—as he firmly believes today—of the CIA.

The CIA admitted in writing to Baker that as a result of the "WH flap" (the initials stand for Western Hemisphere division of CIA) it had to shift assets and personnel in Mexico as well as other posts in which Agee served to minimize the damage of his possible revelations.

It is Agee's opinion that the Mullen cover arrangement in Mexico is "completely irrelevant" to Watergate.

Nonetheless it was President Nixon's stated concern over exposing covert

CIA operations in Mexico that prompted him to issue instructions resulting in the FBI's delay for nearly three weeks in June and July 1972 of its investigation of the "laundering" of Nixon re-election money through a Mexico City bank account.

The President said, however, on May 22, 1973, that he had learned there was no basis for having worried about exposing covert CIA activities in Mexico. Former CIA Director Richard M. Helms was providing repeated assurances of this.

The tortuous path that has brought Agee to his current position of self-exile started in a conventionally middle-class home in Tampa, Fla. His father was a businessman and the atmosphere was politically "reactionary—no, say conventional."

He attended a Jesuit high school and

went to Notre Dame, where Agee was first approached by CIA recruiters in 1956. He joined the following year and took three years of military training under the agency's auspices.

"It didn't take long to develop enthusiasm and decide to stay in. There was a combination of things, the aura of intrigue, the sense of patriotism and public service. It was intellectually stimulating and challenging work," as Agee saw it in the early period.

Now he sees the clandestine service and the agency generally as an instrument of political repression.

Agee manages to live on a series of meager advances while the book is being prepared for publication. His two young sons recently joined him from Falls Church, Va., where they had been living with their mother. The Agees are divorced.