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FBI Tied to Kidnaping of Spies

Washington

The FBI has kidnaped a number of persons it believed to be foreign spies, according to two former FBI agents with direct knowledge of such operations.

One of the former agents placed the number of such kidnapings over the years at "fewer than ten." He said that, as far as he knew, the technique had not been used by the bureau since the mid-1960s.

He said its use had been occasioned by such Cold War incidents as the Cuban missile crisis "when things were pretty rough," and that he was "certain that this is no longer going on."

An FBI spokesman declined comment.

Both agents said that, with one possible exception, the FBI kidnaping targets were suspected spies from Communist countries who had entered the United States with forged American passports and other documents.

The use of the kidnaping technique was also confirmed, although not in detail, by two other former FBI agents.

In separate interviews, the two former agents who described the alleged kidnapings left open the possibility that in one instance the bureau had erred in kidnaping a person who proved to be an American citizen.

One of the agents conceded, however, that in every case the practice was "completely wrong — completely in violation of civil liberties. No question about it."

But he said, "In the business of intelligence, you're faced with the concept of expediency. That often times leads you into extra-legal activities."

Several lawyers, including representatives of the American Civil Liberties Union, pointed out that an alien illegally in this country is by law afforded many of the

same guarantees of due process as American citizens.

The bureau's only legal alternatives in such cases, one layer said, were to turn such individuals over to the immigration and Naturalization Service for a deportation hearing or to charge them with illegal entry or espionage.

Kidnaping, one former agent said, was a last resort used when no alternative means could be quickly found to interrogate a suspected subversive, or to "turn" him into a double agent willing to report to the FBI on the activities of his own intelligence service.

Both men denied that physical torture was ever used in such cases, although one said, when a suspect had been located, "You'd

pick him up and take him somewhere and work him over."

The victims often were threatened with death if they did not cooperate, he added, although neither official recalled any instance in which a hostage had been murdered.

One of the former agents maintained, however, that mental duress was an important part of such interrogations. He described one case in which a person was seized and detained in an FBI safe house for "several weeks."

The spy, he said, knew his captors only as "U.S. intelligence agents," at least one of whom was with him whom was with him constantly.

"Someone slept in the same bed with him. We even went with him to the bathroom," he said.

After weeks of intense interrogation the man broke and agreed to become a double agent.

The man did keep his word, the former agent said, and appeared at an appointed meeting with an FBI in-

telligence agent a week later.

But the former agent acknowledged that the technique contained a critical flaw: the FBI had no way of knowing whether the man, or others like him, reported their experiences to their own government, and thus became triple agents.

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