

MEMORANDUM

December 1, 1997

To: Jeremy Gunn
cc: Bob Skwirot
Michelle Combs

From: Peter Voth

Subject: Cover Issues

Philip Agee, Inside the Company

p. 83 “The State Department, Defense Department, and the International Cooperation Administration may also serve as cover employment for CIA officers.”

In addition to his claim that he was appointed as a Foreign Service Officer under the name Jeremy S. Hodapp (p. 133), Agee also lists the names of individuals with CIA affiliations. Those which he states are associated with the State Department are:

Thoron, Christopher CIA operations officer assigned under State Department cover to the U.N. during 1960-65. Remained under State Department cover until 1969...

Weatherwax, Robert CIA operations officer under ICA (predecessor of AID) Public Safety cover, Quito

Dewey Clarridge, A Spy for All Seasons

On page 73, Clarridge refers to his “changing cover agencies” at one point in his career. He again mentions the issue of cover when he notes that Aldrich Ames, while stationed in Ankara, “had less than ideal cover to develop and recruit agents.” The only connection Clarridge makes between the CIA and State Department is located on pages 250 and 260, and involves the story of Linda Flohr, a CIA case officer who reported on developments in Granada before the invasion with a State Department officer. Although Flohr was ultimately awarded a State Department medal for her work,

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she is never explicitly identified as a State Department official.

Ronald Kessler, Moscow Station

On page 36, Kessler makes a number of references to the presence of CIA personnel at American embassies, and reports that CIA officers seem to regard the embassy as “cover for their own activities,” but does not discuss any specific instance of CIA officers posing as State Department employees.

Victor Marchetti & John Marks, The CIA & the Cult of Intelligence (1980 edition)

p. 62 “Approximately 45% of the Clandestine Services personnel is stationed overseas, the vast majority using official cover - i.e., posing as representatives of the State or Defense Department.”

This sentence was not among the 339 passages that the CIA ordered to be deleted from the book’s original printing, implying consent for the release of this information.

p. 180 “...CIA communication clerks handle nearly all classified cables between the American embassies and Washington - for both the CIA & State Department. To have a separate code room for each agency in every embassy would be a wasteful procedure, so a senior CIA communication expert is regularly assigned to the administrative part of the State Department in order to oversee the CIA’s communicators who work under State cover.”

p. 194 “Most State Department communications overseas are handled by the CIA.”

The first of these passages was originally slated for excision by the CIA, but released for the 1974 edition of the book, whereas the CIA never attempted to suppress the latter. In discussing CIA’s handling of State Department communications overseas, the passages imply that CIA personnel are in fact attached to U.S. embassies.

p. 47 “...AID’s Public Safety (police) Division, which regularly supplies cover to CIA operators all over the world.”

This passage was originally slated for excision by the CIA, but released for the 1974 edition of the book.

Colby notes in Honorable Men (p. 318-19) that, in the course of its review of Marchetti’s manuscript,

the CIA “could not object to Marchetti’s making a mistake and saying something that was wrong, since by definition something that was not true could not be classified.” Thus, the passages referring to State Department cover could have been left in the text as a way to maintain that Marchetti’s claim that the State Department is used as cover for CIA agents is false. Conversely, the CIA’s initial attempt to suppress references to cover could be seen as evidence that such revelations are true, and that the later release of the information represents official acknowledgement of the cover issue.

David Atlee Phillips, *The Night Watch*

- p. 61 “CIA officers working under light cover, identified as American officials and attached to an embassy, enjoy the protection of a diplomatic or official passport.”
- p. 130 “...CIA maintains light cover for some officers in embassies overseas...”
- p. 214 “Most CIA personnel employed in a U.S. embassy abroad are more or less concealed by a veneer of diplomatic protection called ‘light cover.’ They carry official or diplomatic passports and identify themselves as American officials without elaborating...A few may have better official cover and work in some embassy office separated from the CIA center; they are generally known only to their immediate cover supervisor, and to the Ambassador and his senior officers.”

In addition, there are a number of passages that refer to “official cover” and make references to CIA personnel working in overseas embassies.

Joseph B. Smith, *Portrait of a Cold Warrior*

- p. 155-56 “The State Department never permitted CIA officers to be integrated into the Foreign Service as Foreign Service Officers. All CIA officers were given titles as Foreign Service Reserve Officer or, if not of sufficiently high rank, as Foreign Service Staff employees...the State Department was reluctant to give appropriate diplomatic titles to CIA officers and, whenever possible, tried to deny them diplomatic passports...The State Department bureaucracy steadfastly fought to make sure that even the Chief of Station should not be given a diplomatic title superior to Attache, if at all possible.”
- p. 256 “I had been forced to surrender the USIS cover I had in Singapore shortly after I returned to Washington in the summer of 1956...My credentials were taken away from me, however, because USIS did not want to carry a surplus CIA body on its rolls since this blocked a position for a legitimate employee...The State Department felt the same way, and officers who had Foreign Service Reserve status were constantly battling to keep it when they served tours of duty in Washington.”

John Ranelagh, *The Agency*

p. 446 “CIA officers posted abroad frequently enjoyed diplomatic cover as embassy officials - ‘political affairs officers,’ ‘analysts,’ and sometimes even attaches and ambassadors. In Vietnam the CIA chief of station was a political officer on the embassy staff (depending on the ambassador, he was sometimes a “special assistant” as well...”

This statement is not attributed to any source. However, the following page contains a quote from Peer DeSilva’s book Sub Rosa detailing an incident in which Henry Cabot Lodge, upon DeSilva’s installation as station chief, ordered him to remove the plaque reading “Special Assistant to the Ambassador” from the door to his office.

Also Reviewed

The following books contain no mention of the cover issue:

Richard Bissell, *Reflections of a Cold Warrior*
Ray Cline, *The CIA under Reagan, Bush and Casey*
Philip Knightley, *The Second Oldest Profession*
Tom Mangold, *Cold Warrior*
David Murphy, *Battleground Berlin*
John Newman, *Oswald and the CIA*
Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*
Stansfield Turner, *Secrecy and Democracy*
David Wise, *Molehunt*
David Wise & Thomas Ross, *The Invisible Government*