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CIA-JOURNALISTS

NEW YORK (AP) -- THE NATIONAL NEWS COUNCIL SAID TODAY IT HAD RECEIVED ASSURANCES THAT THE CENTRAL INTELIGENCE AGENCY WILL NOT HIRE REPORTERS ''AFFILIATED IN ANY WAY'' WITH AMERICAN NEWS ORGANIZATIONS, AND THAT IT WAS DROPPING THOSE ALREADY ON THE PAYROLL.

THE NEWS COUNCIL SAID CIA OFFICIALS, INCLUDING DIRECTOR GEORGE BUSH, TOLD THEM IN A THREE-HOUR MEETING THURSDAY THAT THE PROHIBITION INCLUDED NEWS EXECUTIVES, STRINGERS FOR AMERICAN NEWS ORGANIZATIONS, AND FREELANCE WRITERS ''WHO COULD BE INTERPRETED IN ANY MANNER AS BEING JOURNALISTS.''

THE MEETING WAS REQUESTED BY THE NEWS COUNCIL TO CLARIFY CIA POLICY ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF JOURNALISTS. A SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT REVEALED EARLIER THIS YEAR THAT ''FEWER THAN ONE HALF'' OF THE ESTIMATED 50 PERSONS FROM U.S. MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS WORKING FOR THE CIA WOULD BE DROPPED.

NEW COUNCIL ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR NED SCHNURMAN SAID CIA OFFICIALS DECLINED TO DISCUSS THE NUMBERS OF NEWS PERSONS IN ITS EMPLOY, BUT INFORMED HIM THAT ''AN ORDERLY PHASING OUT'' OF JOURNALISTS WAS UNDER WAY. THE AGENCY OFFICIALS SAID THEY WOULD CONTINUE TO USE, IF NECESSARY, NON-NEWS PERSONNEL OF AMERICAN NEWS ORGANIZATIONS OVERSEAS, SUCH AS DRIVERS OF OFFICE MANAGERS, ''BUT ONLY WITH THE SPECIFIC APPROVAL OF THE HEAD OFFICE OF THE ORGANIZATION CONCERNED.''

SCHNURMAN SAID THE CIA WOULD ALSO USE PART-TIME AMERICAN WRITERS TRAVELLING ABROAD ''WHOSE PRIMARY FUNCTION WAS NOT JOURNALISM, BUT BUSINESS OR SOMETHING ELSE.''

SCHNURMAN SAID THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY WOULD ALSO STOP USING PRESS CREDENTIALS AS A ''COVER'' FOR ITS OPERATIVES, A PRACTICE REVEALED IN THE SENATE COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

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