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FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM Channel 4 News Live at 5:00 STATION WRC TV

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SUBJECT Secret Agents/Espionage

JIM VANCE: In our Focus segment tonight, secret agents, espionage, the super secret shadowy world of spies and counter spies. Here is one version of it.

Television and Hollywood would have us believe that spies and secret agents live like this.

(Clip of TV movie.)

VANCE: But the reality of it all is quite different. Just this week Richard Miller, an FBI agent for 20 years was arrested for allegedly offering two Soviet agents U.S. intelligence information, this in exchange for $50,000 in gold and $15,000 in cash. And Miller worked for the FBI's Los Angeles office where his job was to prevent foreign infiltration of American intelligence activities.

Joining us now are two men who can tell us what it's really like in the world of spies. Arthur Macey Cox is a former CIA agent who specialized in Soviet affairs, and Cord Meyer is the former head of the CIA's terrorist office. Gentlemen, I want to thank you both for joining us.

May I begin with either one of you? In the eyes of many people now, espionage you think of glamor, they think of intrigue, they think of danger. And I'd like to begin with the first one, glamor. Is it a glamorous life?

CORD MEYER: I would say that really it was a very unglamorous business as far as the major effort of the -- those in -- concerned with trying to trace and follow the terrorist threat. It's a long, arduous, tough business involving an

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attempt to identify over a period of time people within the terrorist organizations that can actually be recruited and who can then provide us with the information as to what they are -- what their organizations are doing.

This kind of penetration of the -- of the terrorist organizations is really the first line of defense. And in so far as we can succeed in doing that, we can considerably reduce the threat that is generally facing the world.

VANCE: Mr. Cox, what about danger? Is it a dangerous life persuit?

ARTHUR MACEY COX: Well, I'd say espionage is dangerous. I think the important thing about the whole business, of the public's concept of espionage is that it's not a James Bond game, it's not the kind of thing even that John LeCarré writes about.

Today most of our intelligence, overwhelming amount, comes from technology, from machines. And the human being is becoming less and less important except in things like trying to penetrate terrorist organizations.

VANCE: Mr. Meyer, I'm curious to know about your point of view with reference to technology as it is against the human element. Would you offer an opinion on which is more important, or does that...?

(Counfusion of voices.)

MEYER: I think they both are important and they work together and they neutrally support each other.

We've come a long way from the days of 19 -- in the 1950s when our intelligence about the Soviet weaponry was derived from photography of their May Day parade. We now have these marvelously effective satellites that give us a pretty clear picture of the Soviet order of battle. And there's no substitute for that. And even the best human agent couldn't provide the kind of technical intelligence we have on Soviet weaponry.

VANCE: But with the kinds of technology that's available now, you guys must get tons and tons and tons of material. Does it ever get just overwhelming with all of the material that you can get?

COX: Well, it is tons and tons of material. But the great change is that we now have computers, and computers can take tons of material and store it and we can retrieve it very rapidly. This -- the whole business of intelligence information has changed completely since the '50s and '60s.

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VANCE: Okay. Gentlemen, I want to think you very much for joining us and sharing your experiences with us, Arthur Macey Cox and Cord Meyer. We appreciate it both.

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