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SUBJECT: Foreign Press Reactions to Revelations about CIA

Note: In any public discussion of these reactions, there is some danger of appearing to accept certain allegations as fact, either by the method of presentation or by the denial of some charges (thereby indicating that others are true).

1. The reaction in the U. S. has been far more hysterical and vocal than is the case anywhere overseas.
2. The most damaging media treatment has come from the U. S. press and wire services going abroad which have been picked up and reprinted in foreign newspapers.
3. Certain nuances in the foreign press treatment are worth noting.
 - a. AFP (France) has been treating the subject in the most aggressive and hostile way of any Western wire service.
 - b. The Communist press, such as that of the USSR, at first very largely picked up and played the American news service reporting, emphasizing the scandal and hysteria in the U. S. More recently, however, the Communists appear to have gotten their line squared away, and they are now taking advantage of the considerable interest in this subject by focusing on specific youth and student mechanisms that have been compromised, including, of course, anti-youth festival activities.
 - c. The Communists also are now tailoring their overseas foreign language broadcasts to specific audiences, citing anything that has been exposed that would have a particular impact in a given area. For example, for African audiences the Communists are focusing on alleged CIA support of the [REDACTED]
 - d. Media treatment in the UAR is also worth singling out. UAR media came out very early and strongly against CIA, citing alleged CIA support to [REDACTED] a subject of immediate local interest. Subsequently, UAR treatment has been considerably broadened to include anything in the past which could be linked to CIA, such as the Iranian coup of 1953.

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e. A very considerable number of moderate press media abroad have been reporting on CIA with objectivity and, perhaps surprising to some Americans, with little censure. Some foreign newspapers have, in fact, noted Mr. Katzenbach's report that CIA has enabled "farsighted and courageous Americans" to serve their country. Leftist, anti-American outlets have, of course, elaborated on any flamboyant and far-fetched angle: that CIA is seeking to ruin the economies of developing countries in order to keep these countries dependent on the U.S.; that CIA is not reluctant to engineer political assassinations; that CIA is ever ready to subvert, subsidize, corrupt, buy or rent. Where there is anti-U.S. sentiment, the U.S. press exposures of CIA have provided an undreamed of club. In one country, a leftist politician whose party was beaten in an election has now charged that CIA money enabled the winning political party to beat him.

f. There has been embarrassment expressed by some student groups; others have hardly commented at all.

4. Looking at the overall press coverage abroad, there has been considerable reporting, based on U.S. press services going abroad, but the foreign press has engaged in very little editorializing. Certain countries of special significance can be noted, however.

a. Chile

(The U.S. Ambassador in this country is a former president of the U.S. National Student Association. There have been allegations that CIA was involved in the recent election of President Frei. The Foundation for Youth and Student Affairs (FYSA), which has figured prominently in news stories, has a representative in Chile.)

As far as press coverage in Chile is concerned, however, only the Communist newspaper El Siglo mounted a campaign against CIA and focused heavily on Ambassador Dungan, charging that he has past CIA connections and that he is manipulating CIA strings in Chile. Except for the Communist press, other papers maintained a pointed silence until the influential non-Communist El Mercurio, on 27 February, snapped back at the Communist press, noting: "It is natural that the Communist publicity machine has mobilized all over the world to take maximum advantage of the facts recently revealed about the activities of the CIA."

El Mercurio went on to outline Communist activities in student organizations, wars of liberation and other movements

alongside of which CIA activities appear a "simple antidote". The editorial concluded . . . "the Communists have no call to criticize the CIA for acting defensively against subversion and guerrillas."

In a later editorial, El Mercurio hit at Communist subversion, saying that CIA actions may be questionable in the American society, but . . . "the programs of the CIA are small scale in comparison to the tasks the Communists carry out with enormous means and excellent organizations." The editorial concluded . . . "that the Communists feign themselves to be scandalized by the surreptitious financial help (the CIA has given) to neutral organizations is just another proof of their fantastic audacity."

b. Spain

Government controlled media in Spain have focused on the allegations of funding of student activities in Spain, and the travel by USNSA and International Student Conference representatives to Spain to work with Spanish students who are in opposition to the Spanish government.

c. Italy

U. S. columnist Drew Pearson reported on CIA funding of the Christian Democratic Party in elections some 18 years ago. This particular allegation has, of course, received attention in Italian media.

d. South Africa

Of all countries in Africa, the media in South Africa have devoted the most coverage, in both radio and newspaper outlets, to the subject of CIA. Coverage has emphasized CIA funding of the American Society for African Culture (AMSAC) and the American African Institute (AAI), two organizations which South African media note as opposing the domestic policies (apartheid) of the South African government. In this vein, South Africa has also linked CIA to the American Committee on Africa, an organization which even the U. S. press has not alleged to have CIA connections.

5. There are clearly a number of reasons why foreign (i. e., non-Communist) reactions have been so moderate. They are worth noting.

a. In many countries, other local issues have been of much more overriding importance -- such as the elections in India, or Peru's sudden involvement in a quarrel with the U. S. over fishing rights.

b. There has been a certain reaction to the over-reaction in the U. S. In many countries there is no desire to embarrass local U. S. diplomatic personnel over what is viewed largely as a domestic U. S. issue.

c. In many countries, there is a sophisticated cynicism among the country's elite (including, in some cases, students). These are people who expect that CIA is doing some of the things it is charged with doing. It is not surprising to them. They believe that the U. S. Government is doing these things for they believe that all big powers do so. The fact that CIA is acting as the arm of the U. S. Government holds no sinister application.

d. And finally, foreign observers have expressed amazement at the details which continue to flow throughout the world via the U. S. press. They are astonished that such irresponsibility would be displayed by U. S. commentators and newspapers in a matter that could be so damaging to U. S. national interests.