BOOK BLOWS COVER

CIA and Mexico: Close Association Leaves Red Faces

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MEXICO CITY—Both the United States and Mexican governments have been embarrassed recently by an accelerating series of revelations about the work of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in Mexico.

The revelations are far different from those about the CIA efforts in Chile to weaken the government of the late Salvador Allende. There has been no hint that the CIA is doing anything to hurt the government of President Luis Echeverria of Mexico and his ruling Party of the Institutional Revolution (PRI). In fact, the stories stress that there has been close cooperation between the Mexican government and the CIA. That is what makes the revelations so embarrassing to Mexico.

Though it won't be listed on any public agenda, a discussion of changes in CIA personnel and perhaps operation stemming from the revelations will probably take up some of the time of President Echeverria and President Ford when they meet at the border towns of Nogales, Ariz., and Nogales, Sonora, next Monday.

The revelations have come from a former CIA agent in Mexico, Philip E. F. Agee, who is now living in London. Publishers in London and Paris plan to publish his book, "Inside the Company: a CIA Diary," in January. In advance of publication, Agee has been talking with newsmen about the work of the CIA in Mexico and the rest of Latin America. These interviews have made the
Mexico Embarrassed by Its Ties With CIA

Continued from First Page

in government statements, recriminations among politi
cians, and counterattacks, and a campaign by some Mexi
can journalists and politicians to blame a good deal of
Mexico's troubles on the CIA.

In an interview in London in early October, Ace
named 35 agents within the U.S. Embassy in Mexico
City and two others outside. He said that Rich
and Sampson was the CIA station chief in Mexico
and that Jonathan Hanke was his assistant. Both are
classified officially as po
tical officers of the em
bassy.

There were obvious er
ors on Agee's list. One man
listed had left the embas
sy a few months ago. Another,
Winston Scott, whom Agee
identified as a former station
chief now living in Mex
ico, died a few years ago.

Despite this, most inde
pendent observers believe
that the list is, in general,
very accurate and up to
data. The identity of most
of the CIA agents within an
embassy is usually an open
secret, known both by
other employees of the
embassy and by outsiders,
like American newsmen,
who spend much time
talking with embassy offi
cials.

The publication of the
list has put the Mexican
government in a kind of
quandary. It is difficult to
see why so many of the names
are surprising Mexican officials.
Most of the CIA employees
listed were probably what
are known in the diplo
matic world as "revealed
agents." That term de
scribes CIA agents, usual
ly working in an embassy,
whom the U.S. govern
ment identifies as a friend
ly and cooperative
government.

But the Mexican
government does not want
to be known as friendly
to the CIA. A few days after the
list was published, a Mex
ican delegation asked the
Interparliamentary Union
meeting in Tokyo to con
demn the interference by
intelligence agencies in the
internal affairs of other
nations. The Mexi
cans, however, cited the
CIA in Chile, not Mexico,
as an example.

So far, the Mexican
government has not ex
pelled any of those on the
list. Asked about this in a
news conference, Pres
ident Echeverria, in a
mild and somewhat con
fusing comment, said, "In
regard to two or three
of the people, we can never
expel them from the coun
try because they died some time ago. The others
are officials of the Ameri
can Embassy who worked
there publicly in different
offices.

"This man (Agee) was
here in 1968," Echeverria
went on, "and he had in
terests, who knows why,
to make these declara
tions, and, curiously, he is
very insistent about the
subject. But there are
dead people on the pub
lished list. I believe that
it will soon be made more
precise for me who is dead
and who works in the
American Embassy.

"This is the present
circumstance. We are going to
invite this man to Mexico
to help us find them.

The reaction of the U.S. Embas
sy has been about
what might be expected.
When Agee's first revela
tions came, U.S. Ambas
ador John Jova told
Mexican newsmen, "You
have to realize that Agee
is a bitter, fired ex-em
ployee. That's why you
should take these things
with a grain of salt."

But once the list was
published, the embassy
switched to silence. With
out denying the accuracy
of the list, the embassy has
refused to comment on it.

Assuming the list is gen
erally accurate, it is ob
vious that the work of
some CIA agents has been
handicapped by the loss of
cover. Few Mexicans will
want to keep up friends
ships with those on the
list. The CIA obviously
needs to send at least a
couple of new agents to Mexico
now.

Watergate brought a
prominence to the coopera
tion with the CIA. Watergate
operations in Mexico