THE INTELLIGENCE IDENTITIES PROTECTION ACT: A CONFLICT BETWEEN...
This essay traces the legislative course for several bills relating to the need for the protection of the identity of covert human intelligence sources for the US government. While the legislative process is not entirely complete, the author predicts that a House-Senate compromise will soon be reached and that a law protecting the identities of covert US intelligence agents will soon be sent to the President for signature.
The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the appropriate military service or government agency.

US ARMY WAR COLLEGE

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH BASED ESSAY

THE INTELLIGENCE IDENTITIES PROTECTION ACT: A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE PROMISE OF LIBERTY AND THE NEED FOR SECRECY IN A DEMOCRACY

BY

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LTC, US ARMY

23 APRIL 1982

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Secrecy in a democracy can never be better than a necessary evil. However, we expect our government to ensure our safety as well as our liberty and to do this some secrecy is necessary. The First Amendment rights of the press and public must be balanced with the right of the Executive to conduct foreign relations.  

- James A. Urry

It seems to me that when our laws give better protection to statistics about our soybean crops than they do to the lives of people like Dick Welch, it is time to re-examine our priorities.  

- John Maury  
  President, Association of  
  Former Intelligence Officers
THE ISSUE

On Christmas Eve, 1975, a United States citizen by the name of Richard Sheffington Welch was assassinated just outside of his home in Athens, Greece by unknown gunmen. He was 46 years old. Welch was a gentle individual, married, the son of a retired Army colonel. He had graduated from Harvard in 1951, majoring in the classics, and had become fluent in the Greek language. He had risen to the executive level of the organization in which he was employed — and his "success" led to his death. Only a month earlier, on 25 November, the Athens Daily News had exposed him as a top "U.S. spy", or more specifically, the Athens Chief of Station for the Central Intelligence Agency. The President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and the Director of Central Intelligence were among those mourning the tragic incident at services for him at Arlington Cemetary.

The U.S. intelligence community and many other responsible officials attributed Welch's demise to the publicity generated in spy-ferreting books written by former CIA agents such as Philip Agee, and especially to a quarterly publication called Counterspy. This magazine, started up by activist Norman Mailor and with which Agee was closely associated, had identified publicly by the end of 1975 over 2000 CIA undercover agents. Richard Welch was one of them. The Athens newspaper had "only" republished the information.

On 4 July 1980, the home of Richard Kinsman, an American Embassy
official in Kingston, Jamaica, was attacked by machine-guns and a small bomb. Fortunately, Kinsman and his family escaped unharmed. Why this attempted killing? Authorities concluded that there was more than coincidence to fact that just 48 hours earlier, an individual by the name of Louis Wolf had revealed the names of 15 alleged CIA officers in Jamaica at a press conference and claimed that Kinsman was the CIA Chief of Station. The position held by Louis Wolf at the time was that of co-editor of another magazine with which Agee is closely associated, the Covert Action Information Bulletin.

Sadly, there is no effective law in this nation on which to base prosecution of those who intentionally reveal the identities of CIA operatives engaged in undercover activities, even though the Administrations and Congresses of the past seven years have been very much aware of this serious shortcoming. Various members of Congress have attempted to pass some sort of legislation directed at protecting agents names; Senator Bentsen introduced a bill with this purpose in mind back in 1975. But, as calendar year 1982 began, nothing had ever reached the President's desk to be signed into law. While virtually all lawmakers have agreed that the practice of deliberately exposing CIA personnel and CIA agents is abominable, the debate has resolved primarily around how to deal with this practice without infringing on First Amendment rights.

The purpose of this paper is to look at the reasons why such a law is needed, and to examine a bill, which as of this writing, appears finally on its way to becoming a Public Law.
THE RATIONALE

It should seem obvious to most people that disclosing the name of a covert intelligence agent could place his very life in jeopardy. And it should not be too difficult in following this line of reasoning to understand how his family might also find their lives threatened. Yet, there are those who suggest that the deadly "cloak and dagger" business exists today only in comic books — or that the United States should not be involved in covert activities anyway — or that only one agent's death and one unsuccessful attempt on another have been linked to all the many names already revealed. These are naive statements and they are certainly incorrect. Undercover intelligence work is ongoing and it is necessary for the survival of our way of life, and even one death is one too many. But in addition to the threat to life issue, what other harm comes from disclosing names of intelligence agents?

First of all, the professional effectiveness of the agent so compromised is substantially damaged, sometimes irreparably so. He can become subject to losing his employment just as someone in any other line of work who loses his ability to produce. Replacing these people with others qualified to perform the mission is difficult and, in some cases, impossible, and having to do this puts a strain on the intelligence community's human source collection capabilities. Disclosure also impairs our relations with friendly foreign sources. These foreign sources of information would reduce or even terminate
their contacts with our agents for fear of disclosure by affiliation. The overall effect is a marked drop in the ability of our intelligence agencies to perform the tasks assigned to them by our government.

The argument has been put forward by some that in this age of sophisticated electronics we no longer need people to act as undercover sources of intelligence. That with our highly technical communications equipment and our many satellites circling the earth we need not rely on the human element in disguised roles or "behind enemy lines". Such an argument fails to consider a basic tenet of intelligence work and that is that whereas pictures, impulses, signals, sounds etc., can provide good indications of enemy capabilities, the best indications of enemy intent continue to be provided by human sources.

Covert activities have been a recognized instrument of foreign policy in the United States since the initial period of the Cold War, roughly 1948. But, it goes beyond then really. Espionage, secret codes, double agents, all played a key role in the Revolutionary War that gave birth to this nation. Covert operations were so skillfully conducted by both the American and British sides that to this day the identities of some of these key intelligence agents have not been established. Our leaders back in the 18th Century were keenly aware of the importance secret intelligence work could have in assisting to establish the freedoms and liberties promised by a democratic form of government. And now the need is even greater. Now the oceans no longer serve to isolate us from the power struggles of the rest of the world, and mankind has developed the ability to intentionally or even accidently destroy itself with the touch of a button. But today this democratic society which secrecy helped to develop, in its continued
quest for more individual liberty and freedom, suffers somewhat over the
dilemma of the need for secrecy and the need for openness in government.

As perplexing as the dilemma may be to some, we must maintain the
ability to conduct covert operations. Covert action provides our
leadership an alternative between doing nothing in a situation which
portents to go against the interest of the United States and direct
overt military action. It provides a way for this nation to mask the
role that it plays, too — a sometimes desirable capability. Covert
activities are sometimes necessary to counter covert activities of
nations hostile to our own. And finally, covert action is often a way
of accomplishing something at minimal cost. In sum, it is absolutely
essential to our survival.

Secrecy, however, is imperative. In intelligence work, secrecy is
the principal tool, because no one is going to provide information to
one of our intelligence agents if he thinks he is going to see it in the
newspaper or have it traced back to him by the identity of his contact
being revealed in a magazine. In this day with so much emphasis on
investigative reporting, inspecting, oversight mechanisms and glorified
"leaders", we must have a law which protects the identities of covert
intelligence agents. Congress is working on it.
As mentioned earlier, concern over First Amendment rights has contributed greatly to the lengthy period of time it is taking Congress to pass an intelligence identities protection act. Another important contributing factor, however, has been a concurrent effort on the part of some congressional leaders to include identities protection as a part of a more comprehensive package aimed at providing broad legislative guidance for the intelligence community.

The hue and cry for reform of the intelligence community that ensued after the Watergate disclosures resulted in determined efforts during the mid 70's by some congressmen to create for the first time in this nation's history, an intelligence charter bill that would serve to spell out exactly what intelligence activities could be limited to. With the passage of time, however, the pendulum began to swing slowly away from the hostile attitude held then by the majority of the Congress toward intelligence organizations. And as support for a strong intelligence capability began to rekindle, opinion began to differ on the purpose that an intelligence charter should serve, or if one should be enacted at all.

The first seriously considered and long discussed intelligence charter legislation was introduced in February 1978 as Senate Bill 2525, and titled the National Intelligence Reorganization-Reform Act. It was 260 pages in length, an all-encompassing document which would have
served to curtail activities of the intelligence agencies. S.2525 never made it out of the Congress, and by April 1980 the concept of a comprehensive intelligence charter had been narrowed down to a seven page document, S.2284 - the Intelligence Accountability Act of 1980.

Not only was S.2284 considerably shorter than its predecessor, the tone had changed as well. The bill proposed:

1) reducing to two the number of congressional committees that need be briefed on covert activities by the CIA

2) providing that any actions by an intelligence agency be done according to procedures approved by an agency director

3) providing for the Attorney General to approve agency guidelines for activities directed at US persons

4) modifying the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act to protect classified information and to limit judicial review

5) and, of course, making it a crime, punishable by jail sentences of five to ten years and fines up to $50,000 for disclosing the identity of an intelligence agent.

S.2284 finally made it into law, but not with the provisions stated above. Due to a lack of agreement on all but one provision of the bill and a lack of time to work out disagreements, the Senate Intelligence Committee in May reworked S.2284 to severely limit the scope to cover only that having to do with congressional oversight. It was felt that the issue of overriding importance was the need for immediate appeal of the Hughes - Ryan Amendment and for limiting the reporting by intelligence agencies to two instead of eight congressional committees. By the end of June the full Senate passed the FY 1981 Intelligence Authorization Act which included this shortened version of S.2284 as an amend-
ment. The House followed suit with their version of the bill, H.R. 7668, and it was signed into law by the President on 14 October 1980 — without a provision for protecting agents' names.

Thus, while members of Congress had been divided in opinion for several years over whether protection of agents identities should be part of a larger package, it became quite apparent to everyone by May 1980, that the issue would have to be addressed as separate legislation. This realization also seemed to have a jelling effect on the efforts of the 96th Congress, particularly the House. As can be seen by the chart below, it had been going in many different directions for the past year and a half, and accomplishing little.\(^8\)

IDENTITIES BILLS INTRODUCED IN THE 96TH CONGRESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bill Number</th>
<th>Date Introduced</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 1068</td>
<td>18 Jan 1979</td>
<td>Robert McClory (R-Ill.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 3356</td>
<td>29 Mar 1979</td>
<td>Charles Wilson (D-Tex.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 3357</td>
<td>29 Mar 1979</td>
<td>James C. Wright, Jr. (D-Tex.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 3496</td>
<td>5 Apr 1979</td>
<td>Stephen L. Neal (D-N.C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 3762</td>
<td>26 Apr 1979</td>
<td>Charles E. Bennett (D-Fl.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 4291</td>
<td>4 Jun 1979</td>
<td>Eldon Rudd (R-Ariz.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 5615</td>
<td>17 Oct 1979</td>
<td>Edward P. Boland (D-Mass.) (with entire HPSCI cosponsorship)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 6316</td>
<td>28 Jan 1980</td>
<td>C.W. Bill Young (R-Fl.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 6347</td>
<td>30 Jan 1980</td>
<td>Thomas A. Luken (D-Ohio)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 6384</td>
<td>31 Jan 1980</td>
<td>John Duncan (R-Tenn.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 6820</td>
<td>17 Mar 1980</td>
<td>Les Aspin (D-Wisc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.R. 7400</td>
<td>28 May 1980</td>
<td>Gerald B.H. Solomon (R-N.Y.)</td>
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Senate

S. 191  23 Jan 1979  Lloyd Bentsen  
       (D-Tex.)

S.2216  24 Jan 1980  D. Patrick Moynihan  
        (D-N.Y.)

Amendment $1682 to  
S.17722  6 Mar 1980  Alan K. Simpson  
(Criminal  
Code Bill)  (R-Wy.)

The two bills that emerged from the Senate and the House to become  
the forerunners of the current legislation were S.2216 and H.R. 5615,  
respectively. Following hearings by the Senate Select Committee on  
Intelligence, S.2216 as amended was reported out in July 1980 in form  
identical to S.391 as introduced last year in the 97th Congress.  
Similarly, after hearings by both the Intelligence and Judiciary  
Committees of the House, H.R. 5615 was reported out in November 1980 as  
an amended bill that was identical to H.R. 4 as introduced last year.
THE INTELLIGENCE IDENTITIES PROTECTION ACT

The provisions of S.391 and H.R. 4 make it a criminal offense under federal law to disclose identities of "certain United States undercover intelligence officers, agents, informants, and sources". As introduced, they read:

Sec.601. (a) Whoever, having or having had authorized access to classified information that identifies a covert agent, intentionally discloses any information identifying such covert agent to any individual not authorized to receive classified information, knowing that the information disclosed so identifies such covert agent and that the United States is taking affirmative measures to conceal covert agent's intelligence relationship to the United States, shall be fined not more than $50,000 or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both.

(b) Whoever, as a result of having authorized access to classified information, learns the identity of a covert agent and intentionally discloses any information identifying such covert agent to any individual not authorized to receive classified information, knowing that the information disclosed so identifies such covert agent and that the United States is taking affirmative measures to conceal such covert agent's intelligence relationship to the United States, shall be fined not more than $25,000 or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

(c) Whoever, in the course of a pattern of activities intended to identify and expose covert agents and with reason to believe that such activities would impair or impede the foreign intelligence activities of the United States, discloses any information that identifies any individual as a covert agent to any individual not authorized to receive classified information, knowing that the information disclosed so identifies such individual and that the United States is taking affirmative measures to conceal such individual's relationship to the United States, shall be fined not more than $15,000 or imprisoned not more than three years, or both.
The bills go on to require the President to establish procedures to ensure effective cover for US intelligence personnel, and to state that such procedures will provide that any agencies of the government determined by the President to provide this cover will render whatever assistance considered necessary by the President to establish and effectively maintain the secrecy of the identities of the intelligence personnel.

The bills also establish defenses and exceptions to prosecution. For instance, a defendant cannot be charged under this act if the US Government has already publicly disclosed the identity of the covert agent in question; if an individual reveals solely his own name as a covert agent; or, if identities are disclosed directly and privately to only the Senate and House Intelligence Committees.

And the bills define "covert agent" to mean an individual whose relationship to the US intelligence community is classified, to include:

1) an employee of an intelligence agency or a member of the military assigned to duty with an intelligence agency

2) a U.S. citizen working outside the U.S. for or with the intelligence community, or for or with the FBI's counterterrorism or counterintelligence components within the U.S.

3) or a foreign national who works or has worked within the previous five years with or for an intelligence agency.

There are other definitions in the bills. They define "intelligence agency", "classified information", "authorized", and so forth. But, the heart of the act is found in the Section 601, quoted above. Section 601. (a) applies primarily to intelligence officers who expose the identities of their colleagues. Type (b) offenders would be government officials and employees who do not have authorized access to
the identities of covert agents but who are able to infer those identities through other authorized access. Subsection (c) will be discussed in detail below. The exact wording of this section has caused considerable controversy, delay, and in hindsight even amusement over the machinations of Congress, as the bills have followed their course.
THE CONTROVERSIES

Just about the only "legitimate" opposition to the overall purpose of S.391 and H.R. 4 has come from Jerry Berman and Morton Halperin testifying on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union. Their argument is against the constitutionality of the bills, and while they have not gone so far as to publicly condone the practice of revealing the identities of intelligence agents, they have offered no suggestion as to how the practice might be curtailed. The ACLU notwithstanding, the legislation has received the widest support imaginable. The vast majority of both Democratic and Republican congressmen firmly support the objectives of the provisions contained therein. In fact, support for legislation to protect the identities of U.S. intelligence officers was part of the 1980 Republican Platform. The Carter Administration, the Reagan Administration, the CIA, the FBI and the Justice Department have all voiced strong backing for a new act of Congress and for these bills in particular. And moreover, the general public endorses the fundamental purpose of the bills. What, then, has been controversial?

First, there was concern about involvement of the Peace Corps. Section 603 (a) of the bills directs the President to establish procedures to effectively conceal the identities of covert agents through the use of designated agencies of the US Government. (This was mentioned earlier.) An argument arose that this provision allowed the President to utilize the Peace Corps as a government agency to provide cover for
the CIA and that this would violate the longstanding and traditional exemption from such uses that the Peace Corps has enjoyed. Understandably, this exemption has been viewed as necessary for the Peace Corps to maintain its credibility as a humanitarian service and for the protection of its young employees who are often serving in remote areas of the world. With this concern in mind talk of a "Peace Corps Amendment" to the bills developed.

Strong opposition to such an amendment grew, based on four good reasons why, though it was no one's intent to use the Peace Corps for any covert intelligence purpose, an amendment to this end would not be prudent.\(^9\) One, no section of either bill requires that the President use the Peace Corps for intelligence cover. Two, the Director of Central Intelligence had already denied that his organization wanted to use the Peace Corps for such purposes and stated that he forthrightly opposed any such proposed use. Three, it was pointed out that hostile foreign powers would not be convinced that the Peace Corps was exempt just because it was so stated in our laws; in fact, singling out the Peace Corps might actually serve to raise suspicion in the minds of our enemies. And four, a statutory exemption of the Peace Corps from providing cover could lead to demands for similar exclusion by other semi-independent governmental agencies, the implication quite obviously being that approval of such demands would severely curtail the flexibility needed to provide adequate cover for U.S. intelligence personnel.

Convinced by these reasons, neither the Senate nor House Intelligence Committees elected to incorporate a Peace Corps amendment into their respective bills before reporting them out of committee.
The second controversy was by far the more significant. It evolved around the exact manner in which Section 601.(c) should be worded. Again, it begins:

Whoever, in the course of a pattern of activities intended to identify and expose covert agents with reason to believe that such activities would impair or impede the foreign intelligence activities of the United States, discloses any information that identifies an individual as a covert agent to any individual not authorized to receive classified information ... [etc., emphasis added]

What occurred was that the House Intelligence Committee replaced the clause "with reason to believe that such activities would" with "with the intent to" impair or impede. The Committee also added that the intent to impair or impede must be shown "by the fact of such identification and exposure" of covert agents. The significance of these two differences in wording is considerable.

Members of the House Intelligence Committee who supported "intent" vis-a-vis "reason to believe" did so on essentially two grounds. First, they felt that adoption of the "intent" standard would insure the constitutionality of the bill, arguing that the "reason to believe" clause was constitutionally subject to doubt on the grounds of vagueness. Secondly, they believed that the bill could be used to prosecute or intimidate honest journalistic or historical investigation of the intelligence community, that is "reason to believe" would impact adversely on one's exercise of his First Amendment rights.

Defenders of the "reason to believe" clause pointed out that no First Amendment rights were being jeopardized — that before a person could be prosecuted the prosecution would have to prove, besides "reason to believe", five essential things: that the defendant

1) knew that the persons to whom he revealed the information
were not authorized to receive classified information

2) knew that the information revealed in fact identified a covert agent

3) intended to disclose information that identified a covert agent

4) knew that the government was taking affirmative measures to conceal the identity of the covert agent

5) engaged in a pattern of activities intended to identify and expose covert agents.

The "reason to believe" advocates argued that the "intent" standard would require the prosecutor to present as evidence the public and private statements of the defendant, information pertaining to his specific motives and political beliefs and other information necessary to prove intent, thus making prosecution much more difficult. "Reason to believe", on the other hand, would require the prosecution to show merely that "any reasonable man" would regard the activities in which he has engaged as tending to impair or impede.

The other change to the language of the bill, "by the fact of such identification and exposure", would require the prosecution to prove that the disclosure of the identity of a covert agent actually did impair or impede our foreign intelligence activities. In other words a defendant under the "by the fact" clause could claim that his disclosure of an intelligence agent's name was motivated by a desire other than to impair or impede, for example to influence public debate. Clearly, the "by the fact" clause would have the effect of increasing the burdens on the prosecution. Further, the security implications of trial proof and discovery could become horrendous.
THE TURNABOUTS

The President, Justice Department and CIA made known to the House Intelligence Committee their strong preference for the original wording, or the wording as contained in S.391. Nonetheless, the Committee reported out H.R. 4 with the "intent" standard and "by the fact" clause intact, and it cleared the Judiciary Committee with only Representative Ashbrook expressing favor for the language in S.391.

During the debate on the floor of the house that followed, Mr. Ashbrook continued to express his opposition to the rewording and offered an amendment which would substitute the original language from S.391 for that presently in H.R. 4. To the surprise of many, the Ashbrook amendment was passed by a vote of 226-181 on the House floor. Following this turn of events a second amendment was proposed extending coverage of the provisions of the bill to former (as well as current) agents of an intelligence agency. This amendment also carried. Thus, on 23 September 1981, the House by a final vote of 354-56, passed H.R. 4 as amended to read identical to S.391 insofar as the "reason to believe" issue was concerned.

Shortly after the House action, S.391 was taken up by the Senate Judiciary Committee, where what occurred is almost unbelievable. To the chagrin of the Administration and the CIA especially, on 6 October, the Committee changed the wording of Section 601(c) to require that the act of disclosing the identities of covert agents be accompanied by a
specific intent to impair or impede the foreign intelligence activities of the United States. Therefore, whereas two weeks earlier the full House had amended the wording of its bill to read as did the Senate's, the Senate Judiciary Committee had now amended S.391 to read similar to the earlier version of H.R. 4.

S.391 did not reach the floor of the Senate until 25 February 1982. During the interim Senator Chafee announced his intention to propose amending S.391 to read as it did originally. In fact, the four-plus month delay in passing from the Judiciary Committee to the floor of the Senate can be attributed in part to parliamentary maneuvers by foes of his amendment. But finally, on 18 March, the Senate voted by a 55-39 margin to accept Senator Chafee's wording. The full Senate then went on to pass by a 90-6 vote S.391 with the "reason to believe" wording.

And so, after thirteen months work in the Senate and ten months effort in the House, S.319 and H.R. 4 go to conference for resolution. Each has traveled its own circuitous route in the process, but the end result is that there are little substantive differences between the two. One would have "reason to believe" that by this spring S.391/H.R. 4 will be signed into law by the President. The following brief chronology is added as recap:

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<th>DATE</th>
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<tr>
<td>5 Jan 1981</td>
<td>S.391</td>
<td>H.R. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Feb 1981</td>
<td>introduced to Senate by Sen. Chafee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Jul 1981</td>
<td>amended to &quot;intent&quot; standard by Intelligence Committee</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Senate Event</td>
<td>House Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Sep 1981</td>
<td>amended back to &quot;reason to believe&quot; by Rep. Ashbrook</td>
<td>passed by full House by 354-56 margin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Oct 1981</td>
<td>amended to &quot;intent&quot; standard by Judiciary Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Mar 1982</td>
<td>amended back to &quot;reason to believe&quot; by Sen. Chafee</td>
<td>passed by full Senate by 90-6</td>
</tr>
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</table>
It is probably safe to assume at this point in time that the Intelligence Identities Protection Act will soon become a Public Law. It may not, however, be safe to assume the argument that it violates First Amendment rights is dead, especially since several news media organizations such as the Society of Professional Journalists, the American Newspaper Publishers Association, and The New York Times, have now expressed opposition to its passage. Furthermore, the American Civil Liberties Union and the editors of Covert Action have announced plans to challenge the legality of the Act in court.\textsuperscript{10}

Those opposed to the constitutionality of the act contend that it seeks to punish the publication of information derived entirely from public sources and will chill public debate on important intelligence issues. The Justice Department feels confident, however, that the Act is clearly constitutional, leaning heavily on the Supreme Court's decision in the "Haig, Secretary of State, vs. Agee" case handed down on 29 June 1981. The Court held that:

Assuming arguendo that First Amendment protections reach beyond our national boundaries, Agee's First Amendment claim has no foundation. The revocation of Agee's passport rests in part on the conduct of his speech: specifically his repeated disclosures of intelligence operations and names of intelligence personnel . . . Agee's disclosures, among other things, have the declared purpose of obstructing intelligence operations and the recruiting of intelligence personnel. They are clearly not protected by the Constitution. The mere fact that Agee is also engaged in criticism of the Government does not render his conduct beyond the reach of the law.
The Supreme Court's decision appears to effectively resolve the issue of whether the disclosure of the identities of covert agents is a legitimate exercise of First Amendment rights. By this decision, it is not.

The issue over this act has been in part, and may continue to be, not only about its constitutionality, but about the proper role of the intelligence community and the mission. There is in this country a substantial anti-intelligence lobby, some of whom going so far as to propose that all clandestine intelligence gathering by the United States be outlawed except in time of declared war. Those who have opposed the Intelligence Identities Protection Act the most are in general those who have attacked or have promoted the attack and the restrictions on the CIA, FBI and often elements of the intelligence community for the past several years.

With all do respect for the good intentions of this anti-intelligence lobby, and with a greater and sincere concern for the rights and privileges promised the citizens of this nation by the First Amendment, support for the Act has long been widespread. In the end, our elected officials felt that the pressing need for effective legislation to protect the lives and careers of intelligence agents and the security of their activities and of the United states was overriding. Senator Goldwater summed up the entire issue in simple eloquence:

So far, some 1,200 names have been made public in magazines or newspapers. Another 700 appeared in a book. A bimonthly bulletin exposes CIA, FBI and military intelligence personnel and assignments. If someone wants to criticize foreign policy, that is their business. If they want to write about the lousy conduct of some of our citizens, that is okay, too. But, they do not have to name names, because that places the lives of human beings in danger. That is not okay.

Certainly, the president will agree, -- and the Intelligence Identities Protection Act will become law.
ENDNOTES


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Senate Judiciary Committee. Interview with Mr. Will Lucas. February 24, 1982.


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