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THE CIA'S AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT COVERT ACTION

R474

*Senator: this is a first class  
bit of work which should be a committee print*

Introduction

In 1974 the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) spent  
at least <sup>24</sup> [ ] million in countries ranging from [ ] to  
[ ] for "covert action." Covert action is secret action  
to influence events in foreign countries which is so designed  
that, if discovered, official U.S. government participation  
can be plausibly denied. In its attempts to influence events  
it is distinguishable from clandestine intelligence gathering  
-- often referred to as espionage.

WBM

What is the legal authority for the CIA to conduct covert  
actions? This paper is one of a series that will attempt to  
answer the question. It will first examine the predecessor  
agencies to the CIA in order that the establishment of the  
CIA may be placed in historical perspective. Next, it will  
set out the legislative history of the National Security Act  
of 1947, the basic charter of the CIA, and the National  
Security Council directives which instructed the CIA to con-  
duct various forms of covert action. Finally, it will present  
a legal analysis of the 1947 Act. Other papers in the series  
will examine the impact on the CIA's authority to conduct  
covert action of Congressional provision of funds of the CIA,

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