

Beheading of James Foley: Media Spies Put All Journalists in Danger

By [Wayne Madsen](#)

Global Research, August 27, 2014

[Strategic Culture Foundation](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Media Disinformation](#)

The increasing tendency of the Central Intelligence Agency and other U.S. intelligence agencies to disregard previous prohibitions against the use of journalists as agents puts every legitimate reporter around the world in jeopardy. The CIA has a checkered past in the use of journalists as intelligence agents. The practice was common in the 1960s and early 70s but was banned by Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. However, when President Ronald Reagan helped reignite the Cold War, the CIA again began using journalists as intelligence agents. The practice put a number of journalists in jeopardy, especially those taken captive by guerrillas groups during the Lebanese civil war. There is nothing to suggest any president since Reagan has discontinued the practice of using journalists as agents.

Intelligence agents operating under journalistic cover can take a number of forms:

- Journalists who openly work for media operations linked officially to past and current CIA operations. These include *Radio Free Europe / Radio Free Liberty*, *Radio Free Asia*, *Alhurra*, *Radio Sawa*, *Radio and TV Marti*, and to some extent, the Voice of America.
- Journalists who work for accredited news media companies who agree to work covertly for U.S. intelligence. Such journalists have been known to work for The Washington Post, the *International Herald Tribune*, and President Barack Obama's one-time employer, Business International Corporation of New York City, publisher of executive business and political newsletters. CIA director Richard Helms had previously worked as a reporter for United Press International.
- Journalists who work for start-up publications linked to the CIA or CIA fronts, including the *Kyiv Post*, *Cambodia Daily*, *Burma Daily*, *Kabul Weekly*, and *Lidove Noviny* of Prague.
- Freelance journalists who become embedded with U.S. military and paramilitary forces and work for one or more media operations having very low profiles.

Journalists working for media operations financed by the U.S. government's Broadcasting Board of Governors have been known to leave legitimate media organizations, where they have already established strong journalistic credentials and high-level contacts, to join government operations like Radio Free Europe and the others to carry out assignments for U.S. intelligence.

One of the CIA's favorite nesting grounds for its journalist-agents during the Cold War was the *International Herald Tribune*, formerly the *Paris Herald Tribune*, based in Paris. The paper was eventually jointly owned by The Washington Post and New York Times. The

managing editor of the Herald Tribune News Service, Nathan Kingsley, left the paper's Paris headquarters to be the head of Radio Free Europe's news service in Munich. Kingsley replaced Gene Mater who became the public affairs spokesman for the Free Europe Committee in New York. Radio Free Europe and the Free Europe Committee were both connected to the CIA.

Publisher of the *International Herald Tribune* John Hay Whitney, a former U.S. ambassador to Britain, was involved in setting up a CIA media operation called Kern House Enterprises, a CIA proprietary firm registered in Delaware. The British branch of Kern House, not surprisingly located at Kern House in London, ran a CIA news service called Forum World Features (FWF), which, in turn, was linked to another CIA front, the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) in Paris. The CCF published, on behalf of the CIA, two periodicals, *Encounter and Information Bulletin*. FWF sold its news stories to 50 newspapers around the world, including 30 in the United States. FWF, which was established in 1965 and overseen by Kermit Roosevelt, the CIA's architect of the overthrow of Iran's democratic government in 1953, also published *Conflict Studies*, a scholarly journal that was among the first to hype the «threat» of global terrorism in the early 1970s. FWF could tap any of its agents as FWF journalists and send them on assignment. One such agent-journalist was assigned to the CIA station in Bangkok.

For years, the CIA operated the Rome *Daily American* in Italy. The English-language paper's editor was a former reporter for the Associated Press. The paper was published by the same press that printed the small Italian-language newspaper representing the views of the Italian Social Democratic Party. The *Daily American* folded in 1986.

Another newspaper operated by the CIA was the *South Pacific Mail*, headquartered in Santiago, Chile and operated by CIA agent David Atlee Phillips. The English-language *South Pacific Mail* was distributed in Chile and several South Pacific nations and territories, from New Zealand and the Samoan isles to the New Hebrides and Tonga. Phillips, who would later be identified as a key facilitator of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas, said that he and some 200 other journalists with whom he was familiar eagerly signed secrecy agreements with the CIA upon their recruitment as agents. Among those who signed such agreements was Arthur Hays Sulzberger, the publisher of *The New York Times*.

Operation Mockingbird was a CIA operation to influence the coverage established news media organizations gave to news events. Included in the CIA news media influence operations were *Time magazine*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Herald-Tribune*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *The Miami Herald*, *The Washington Star*, and *Copley News Service*.

Austin Goodrich was a freelance journalist who wrote for the CIA's favorite newspaper, the *Paris Herald Tribune*, CBS News, and the *Christian Science Monitor*. The *Christian Science Monitor* has become, over the past six years, an ardent supporter of the Obama administration's and CIA's «Responsibility to Protect» (R2P) interventionist foreign policy. Even after Goodrich was identified as a CIA agent he continued working as a journalist in Stockholm, Amsterdam, Bangkok, and West Berlin.

A manifestation of the R2P policy was the CIA's training and arming of Syrian Islamist rebels who eventually kidnapped U.S. photo-journalist James Foley in 2012. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the group that kidnapped Foley, whose reporting experience

included being embedded with U.S. military units in Afghanistan and Iraq and CIA-supported rebels in Libya and Syria, eventually executed him in a gruesome videotaped beheading. But questions remain over whether the CIA's continued use of journalists as agents and the embedding of journalists with CIA-trained insurgents runs the risk of journalists being mistaken as CIA operatives, especially in war zones.

Stuart Loory, who worked as the *New York Herald-Tribune's* correspondent in Moscow in the 1960s before joining the Los Angeles Times and CNN, has said that the CIA's use of journalists as spies calls into question the status of every journalist. He said, «If even one American overseas carrying a press card is a paid informer for the CIA, then all Americans with those credentials are suspect». Loory emphasized that «journalists must be willing to focus on themselves the same spotlight they so relentlessly train on others».

However, the caution urged by Loory has, in some cases, fallen on deaf ears. In 2012, New York Times reporter Mark Mazzetti forwarded an advance copy of a column written by his colleague, columnist Maureen Dowd, to the CIA's spokesperson Marie Harf. Dowd's column concerned a CIA leak to Hollywood that involved the production of a movie called «Zero Dark Thirty». Harf has since been promoted to deputy press secretary for the Department of State where she is undoubtedly still fronting for her old CIA colleagues in spotting willing journalists, particularly foreign correspondents, eager to cooperate with the CIA.

With a number of print publications folding their operations, there has been a mushrooming of web-based news outlets. The *Global Post*, based in Boston, was able to send freelancer Foley to costly assignments in Libya and Syria. A subscription-based news website, which once only had 400 subscribers, is not only able to send someone like Foley off to cover wars but is able to maintain an international correspondents' staff of 65 in high-cost cities ranging from Moscow and Jerusalem to Tokyo and Nairobi. Some uncomfortable questions must be asked. For example, from where does *Global Post* actually receive its funding? And, why does it find it advantageous to embed its freelancers with U.S. military units and CIA-financed Islamist insurgent groups? Looking back over the last 65 years encompassing the CIA's use of journalists as agents, the answers to these questions become all too apparent.

The original source of this article is [Strategic Culture Foundation](#)
Copyright © [Wayne Madsen](#), [Strategic Culture Foundation](#), 2014

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Wayne Madsen](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance

a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca