

Spy Story

Our image of secret agents has been shaped considerably by all those James Bond novels and movies, so it was with considerable surprise and disappointment that we learned that some of the Central Intelligence Agency's operatives are threatening to strike. It seems that the chaps who fly for Air America, the CIA-operated airline in Southeast Asia, want pay increases and improved fringe benefits, including life insurance.

As we said, our mental picture of a spy is based on the exploits of James Bond and the idea of a bunch of men who are paid \$25,000 to \$50,000 a year walking a picket line in their cloaks and daggers just doesn't comport with it. And as for the life insurance, we can't imagine how the secretary could disavow if he had to deal with the executors of a spy's estate.

Of course, there is always the possibility that the whole thing is an elaborate cover story to make Air America look like a real airline, with labor troubles and all that. The thing could easily get out of hand, though. The airline might decide it would look even more legitimate if it advertised. That would require it to disclose the routes it flies, and there is an off chance that it would begin attracting real customers. Before long, Air America would actually be in the airline business. And then its pilots would go on strike.

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: 28-Oct-2009