

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

CHRONICLE

m. 330,225

S. 352,138

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Date: SEP 2 1964

CIA Pops Up Again In a Strange Place

THE CENTRAL Intelligence Agency (CIA) does not, in its latest public exposure, add to its luster or to the confidence of the public which pays its huge and unannounced check.

Normally, operations of the CIA spooks reach the public prints only after another adventure in ineptitude has embarrassed the United States. This time, however, a highly secret operation of the agency has been uncovered by, of all things, another agency of the Government. Since the CIA has bamboozled ambassadors and misled Presidents, this is, in a way, reassuring.

THE CIA HAS NOW been revealed as a source of funds for a foundation suspected by Representative Wright Patman of using its tax-exempt monies in battles to win control of private business.

The CIA's entry into the foundation field has interesting implications. It may certainly create questions about the credentials of any American scholar traveling anywhere on a foundation grant. The brush leaves a wide smear.

That the CIA was involved with a foundation of questionable practice should not embarrass it. It has often been found in alliances with partners whose reputations should assure them arrest on sight. We have urged that its activities be limited to the essential gathering of intelligence and that it be restrained from dallying in coups d'etat or sponsorship of bombing runs on native villages in Asia, Africa and Latin America. We don't think the CIA should play with tax-exempt foundations, either.