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FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM All Things Considered.... STATION WETA Radio
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SUBJECT Report on Richard Welch *with Winslow Peck and Doug Porters*
members of Counter-Spy STAFF

SUSAN STAMBERG: Last week in Athens, CIA section chief Richard Welch was shot to death outside his home. The assassin has not yet been caught. But over the weekend, the Director of the CIA pointed an accusing finger not at extremists abroad, but at a group here in Washington which devotes itself fulltime to muckraking the U.S. intelligence community. The group calls itself the Fifth Estate and had uncovered Welch's identity and home address in Counter-Spy, its quarterly magazine. Now the Fifth Estate is getting death threats.

Jeff Stein has details.

WINSLOW PECK: I don't look upon Congress as saving us. What is going to save us is everyone in this country just saying no. So I would say with the CIA, certainly we have to abolish it. It has become just a -- perhaps one of the most heinous gangs of cutthroats and murderers that the world has ever seen.

At this particular time, I think our goal is certainly to disorganize it, destabilize it, through whatever means are necessary.

JEFF STEIN: That was last September. Winslow Peck, a member of the Fifth Estate laying out his group's plans to destabilize the Central Intelligence Agency. Also that month, in its magazine Counter-Spy, the Fifth Estate had named Richard S. Welch as a spy for the CIA. Eight days ago, Welch was gunned down outside his home on his way to work in Athens. Nine days ago, the Fifth Estate was an unknown group of radical ex-intelligence officers. Over the weekend, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, William Colby, denounced the group for what he called irresponsible and paranoid attacks on employees of his

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agency. But Fifth Estate spokesman Doug Porter says today that they are not to blame for Welch's death, that Welch was known all around the world as a CIA agent.

DOUG PORTER: He was originally exposed in 1967 in an East German publication called Who's Who in the CIA. He was exposed when he was in British Guiana in 1969. He was exposed while he was in Peru. He was exposed once again when he went to Greece. And we were not connected with any of those disclosures.

The fact is that he was the type of CIA agent who does function under what's known as light cover. They don't give them much cover at all because they want people to know that they can go to the CIA. There has to be an obvious connection for them to be able to function in a politically powerful way. And Welch was one of those people.

STEIN: Porter says his group only publishes the name of CIA agents when those names have popped up in print overseas.

PORTER: We reveal the names of agents who have already been revealed in the countries. We get newspaper reports from those countries and then we reprint those names.

So, if a deep-cover agent was exposed in, let's say, Germany and it appeared in the German newspapers, then we would reprint it for the people of the United States.

STEIN: Porter maintains his group supports the collection of information by the CIA. What he's against are the so-called dirty tricks, the assassinations and overthrowing of governments.

Even critics of the intelligence agencies themselves have had a hard time deciding how to separate information collection and dirty tricks. I asked him if the Fifth Estate could be expected to do that.

PORTER: At this point, no. I think it's a very muddled question; it's one that really does need to be sorted out. The National Security Agency certainly collects more information than CIA does. CIA agents over the years, their role as clandestine enforcers of U.S. foreign policy has grown rather than shrunk. And there's no clear guidelines for what they're supposed to be doing, so it's no wonder that they get confused. I'd be confused too if I was in their situation.

STEIN: Breaking into the limelight can have its price. While I was there, the telephone rang. The caller was not polite. He said he would kill everyone there. There have been other threats.

PORTER: Well, we have received several death threats over the phone. One was some individuals living in Silver Spring, Mary-

land that said at two o'clock on Friday that we'd be killed. The other thing is that on December 26th, late in the evening, a man walked into a TV station in Houston and announced the creation of a new organization called Veterans Against Communist Sympathizers. They announced that they were going to kill members of the Fifth Estate, Frank Church, Fred Harris, and Ronald Dellums. And the FBI is supposedly investigating it. They haven't talked to us, but they have talked to the congressional people involved, and that's how we found out.

STEIN: Porter says the Fifth Estate will continue to publish names of CIA agents abroad, as well as expand its targets here at home.

PORTER: We have an issue of Counter-Spy coming out in February. We're going to publish the names of agents in Sweden, France, and Angola. They're agents whose names have been revealed in the press in those countries, and we intend to continue our activities, not only directed towards the CIA, but also towards other institutions which threaten the basic principles on which this country was founded.

STEIN: Such as?

PORTER: The military, the FBI, drug enforcement, etcetera. The next issue of Counter-Spy is going to focus primarily on the military.

STEIN: All sides on the question of the CIA admit the screws are tightening; the whiff of court actions are in the wind as much as the gunpowder of spies killing spies.

Richard S. Welch will be buried with full military honors at Arlington Cemetery this week.