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Legendary CIA counterspy

James Jesus Angleton dies

J By Bill Gertz
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James Jesus Angleton, celebrated CIA masterspy and one of the most colorful figures in U.S. intelligence, died yesterday at Sibley Memorial Hospital. He was 69.

Mr. Angleton, the first U.S. intelligence official to reveal the Soviets' use of strategic deception and "disinformation," died at 10:23 a.m., according to his daughter, Lucy Angleton. The death was attributed to lung cancer, she said.

Mr. Angleton developed and later ran the CIA's counterintelligence section between 1954 and 1973, at a time when counterintelligence — detecting and exploiting enemy spies — played a major role in U.S. intelligence.

Former CIA Director Richard Helms, who worked alongside Mr. Angleton for many years, yesterday praised the counterspy chief as "a great patriot" who played a pivotal role in the developing CIA capabilities against hostile spying.

"James Angleton was to American counterespionage what Thomas Edison was to the development of electricity," Mr. Helms said.

At the CIA, agency spokeswoman

Kathy Pherson issued a statement calling Mr. Angleton "a longtime intelligence professional, who gave many years of service to his country."

"We regret his passing," Ms. Pherson said.

N. Scot Miler, an Angleton protege at the CIA until 1974, praised his former boss as a "renaissance man" who attempted to build a national counterintelligence program in the face of rigid bureaucratic resistance.

"He was a global thinker, who was the first to recognize the dangers of Soviet disinformation," Mr. Miler said in an interview. "From about 1965 on, he tried to educate people to the fact that disinformation was more than just propaganda: It is part and parcel of the communist program of political, strategic and military subversion of the West."

A major character in both contemporary spy fiction and non-fiction, Mr. Angleton coined the term "wilderness of mirrors" in de-

scribing the business of spy vs. spy, where perceptions and deceptions were not be accepted at face value.

Tall and angular, Mr. Angleton departed from the agency in December 1974 following a clash with

William Colby, who was then director of the CIA, over policies and efforts to root out Soviet spies within the agency and among Soviet bloc defectors.

Mr. Angleton became the target of agency opponents and critics who opposed his counterintelligence methods. He was investigated and later cleared by the Senate Intelligence Committee that probed CIA activities in the mid-1970s.

Within a year of his departure from the CIA, the counterintelligence staff he built had been drastically reduced from about 300 specialists to about 80. According to some intelligence professionals, the reductions led to a government-wide backlash against counterintelligence that persists to this day.

Sen. Malcolm Wallop, Wyoming Republican, called Mr. Angleton "the architect of the best counterintelligence program the United States ever had."

"In the mid-1970s, Mr. Angleton went out of fashion, but he lived long enough to see time and events vindicate him and how little his accusers understood the difficult and inherently thankless business of counterintelligence," Mr. Wallop said. "Today we can be grateful for the

lessons of skepticism and intellectual honesty for which James Angleton should always be remembered."

Mr. Angleton told friends privately that the current Moscow embassy scandal, involving U.S. Marine guards charged with allowing Soviet agents inside secret sections of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, was a vindication of sorts since he believed it was a direct result of the counterintelligence cutbacks of the late 1970s.

He once described penetration agents — "moles," spying covertly for the Soviet Union from within the U.S. government — as "a way of life" for Soviet intelligence activities directed against the West. He believed five such moles were left in place when he left the CIA.

He was born in Boise, Idaho, on Dec. 9, 1917, and grew up in Milan, Italy, where his father, Hugh Angleton, was a representative of the National Cash Register Co. He received his early education at Malvern College in England before attending Yale University, where he graduated in 1941.

At Yale, Mr. Angleton edited a literary journal, *Furioso*, that was known for publishing such poets as

Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, e.e. cummings and Archibald MacLeish. Through his interest in poetry he also came to know the British poet T.S. Eliot.

He attended Harvard University law school, was drafted into the Army in 1943 and joined the Office of Strategic Services, the wartime predecessor of the CIA.

With the OSS, Mr. Angleton learned the difficult task of counterintelligence, once described by a practitioner "as the most difficult intelligence area since it deals with the dark side of human nature — betrayal, revenge and lust."

He learned the counterspy business in London under the Soviet mole in British intelligence, H.A.R. "Kim" Philby, who spied secretly for the Soviets in Britain until he defected to the Soviet Union in 1963. As a second lieutenant, Mr. Angleton was placed in charge of OSS counterintelligence in Italy, where he succeeded in exposing a double agent spying inside the Vatican.

After the war, he continued in intelligence work as an operations executive until the CIA was formed in 1947, when he went to work in the agency's counterintelligence section.

Mr. Angleton spent his last years in retirement defending former intelligence agents who were persecuted by the U.S. government during the anti-intelligence backlash of the late 1970s. Along with other former CIA officials, he established the Security and Intelligence Fund, initially a legal defense fund that became the Security and Intelligence Foundation.

At his Northern Virginia home, Mr. Angleton raised orchids and harvested honey from a bee hive. He was also known as a master fly fisherman and an avid duck hunter.

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He is survived by his wife, Cicely d'Autremont Angleton of Arlington; a son, James Charles Angleton of Los Angeles; two daughters, Guru Sangat Kaur of Great Falls, Va., and Lucy Angleton of New Mexico.

Funeral services will be held Friday at 1:30 p.m. at Rock Spring Church United Church of Christ, 5010 Little Falls Road, Arlington. The family asks that expressions of sympathy be in the form of contributions to the American Cancer Society.