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Richard Stolz, a Retired CIA Officer, Is Recalled to Head Secret Operations

By JOHN WALCOTT

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WASHINGTON—In the first of an expected series of personnel shifts following the Iran-Contra scandal, Central Intelligence Agency Director William Webster summoned a veteran intelligence officer from retirement to run the agency's secret operations.

Mr. Webster named Richard Stolz, 62 years old, to the post of deputy director of operations. A 31-year veteran of the CIA's clandestine service who retired in 1981, Mr. Stolz will succeed Clair George, who is retiring at the end of this month.

The appointment seemed to signal Mr. Webster's desire to put the Iran-Contra affair and other recent covert-action controversies behind the agency. In a statement, the CIA director said: "Dick Stolz's strong background in the operations side of this agency eminently qualifies him to fill this most important position."

Former CIA Director Stansfield Turner, who said he had considered Mr. Stolz for the same top post, praised the selection.

"Bravo," said Adm. Turner. "I think Mr. Webster's off to a good start with his personnel changes. Mr. Stolz was not tarred by recent events at the CIA, and I don't think he would have tolerated them if he'd been there because he understands the importance of following the law and the rules."

Aides to Mr. Webster said the director is studying a report, which they said was completed last week by his special counsel, Washington lawyer Russell Bruemmer, on the CIA's performance in the Iran-Contra affair. Officials who have read the report said it contains a series of "legal briefs" on the roles played in the affair by Duane "Dewey" Clarridge, head of the CIA's Counterterrorism Center; Alan Fiers, head of the agency's Central America Task Force; the former CIA station chief in Costa Rica; the CIA station chief in Honduras; the chief of an agency base at Aguacate, Honduras; and others.

Intelligence sources said Mr. Bruemmer concluded that some CIA officers helped provide aid to the Nicaraguan rebels without proper authorization, and that some failed to tell the CIA's inspector general and congressional investigators the truth about their activities.

The sources said some of the CIA officers implicated in the Iran-Contra affair are expected to be transferred, ordered to take early retirement, or perhaps even fired after Mr. Webster finishes studying Mr. Bruemmer's report.

It isn't clear, however, if the personnel changes Mr. Webster began making yesterday will head off efforts by the Senate and House intelligence committees to tighten oversight of covert activities.

Mr. Stolz, the new chief of CIA covert operations, joined the CIA in 1950 after he was graduated from Amherst College, which also is Mr. Webster's alma mater. He served under cover as a State Department political officer in a number of European capitals, including Moscow; Rome; Frankfurt, West Germany; and Sofia, Bulgaria. He also served as chief of the CIA's European operations division and as the agency's chief liaison with Britain's intelligence services before he retired.

"He's a spy's spy," said former CIA operations director John McMahon, who called Mr. Stolz "a super choice."

Since his retirement from the CIA, Mr. Stolz has worked as a consultant on national security issues, a CIA official said.

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