

# Ex-director of CIA says he tried to halt aide

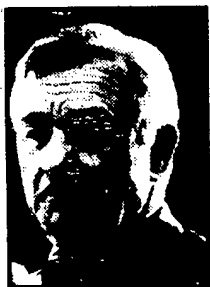
By JAMES LONG

of The Oregonian staff

Think of a character from a Tom Clancy novel: a square-built guy in his 60s, medium height, silver hair, clear blue eyes in a creased, deeply tanned face.

Something about his civilian suit says he isn't used to wearing it; that he'd feel more at home in crisp Navy whites with gold shoulder boards and four stars.

Add something else for the Clancy plot: In 1977, this ex-admiral comes



TURNER

out of retirement to take over the Central Intelligence Agency for another ex-Navy officer and former Georgia peanut farmer, Jimmy Carter.

Nothing much is standard about this former admiral, former CIA Director Stansfield Turner, except his central-casting appearance.

A Rhodes scholar, a graduate of Oxford as well as Annapolis, Turner may have been the most unpopular CIA director in history as he cleaned house there — or tried to — in 1977-81.

Turner flew into Portland on Wednesday to call attention to his new book, "Terrorism and Democracy," during a round of appearances at bookstores and radio and television talk shows. In an interview at Portland International Airport, Turner grimaced at a headline about a former subordinate who had just put the CIA, and maybe the White House itself, on the spot again with a crime confession in federal court Tuesday.

"I'm not surprised," Turner said of his ex-subordinate, Alan D. Fiers Jr., who pleaded guilty to withholding information from Congress. "I didn't trust him while I was there. He was headed for an important job, and I tried my best to derail him, and the system was just gung ho to put him there. And I lost."

## Fiers testifies

Turner wouldn't say what job Fiers was given. However, the story said Fiers was running the CIA's covert Central American operations in 1984-86.

Fiers said in federal court that Lt. Col. Oliver L. North told him in the summer of 1986 about the illegal Iran-Contra arms enterprise that North was running. The enterprise involved selling arms to Iran despite a federal embargo and using the profits to support anti-Communist guerrillas in Nicaragua — another direct violation of federal law.

Fiers said he briefed a superior about North's revelation and that the superior ordered him to repeat the information to Clair E. George, then deputy director for operations, the No. 3 official in the CIA.

This was before Iran-Contra became general knowledge.

Fiers said George ordered him to lie when Congress started subpoenaing CIA officials that October to see what the agency had known, and when, about the North operation.

Fiers claimed, under oath, that he'd gotten his information about the scam by watching a CNN television report.

Fiers' guilty pleas were significant because they marked the first time a senior CIA official publicly admitted knowing about the Iran-Contra affair before the world knew. Also, by fingering a CIA official as high as George, Fiers may have opened the way for a new look not only at Iran-Contra but at the so-called "October Surprise" plot.

"October Surprise" is a tangled, unproved rumor having to do with a supposed conspiracy by the Reagan presidential campaign under the late William Casey to delay the release of U.S. Embassy hostages from Iran until after the November 1980 election.

## Alleged plot outlined

Casey and his cohorts supposedly made a deal to sell arms to Iran, despite an official embargo, to ensure that President Carter wouldn't spring the hostages at the last minute and tip the election away from Reagan.

The Washington Post \_\_\_\_\_  
 The New York Times \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Washington Times \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Wall Street Journal \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Christian Science Monitor \_\_\_\_\_  
 New York Daily News \_\_\_\_\_  
 USA Today \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Chicago Tribune \_\_\_\_\_  
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The hostages were released the day Reagan was inaugurated.

Turner said he knew the Iranians at least approached the Reagan campaign about arms and they approached John Anderson's campaign. It was completely beyond my imagination that either one of them would try to make a deal of this nefarious sort. I never suspected this."

But looking back, Turner said, he thinks there's enough circumstantial evidence to warrant an investigation, even at this late date.

"An accusation of delaying the release of Americans is a very terrible one," the ex-CIA director said. "I don't have any more information about it than anything you get out of the media."

But Turner doesn't doubt that Casey was capable of it. "Oh, I wouldn't put it past him for two minutes," he said.