

CIA Veteran Claims DOD Persecution

Bingaman Asks Pentagon To Reopen Probe

By Tom Sharpe

JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

A former analyst for the Department of Defense says he has been living in Santa Fe for a year and a half because the government agency targeted him as a security risk in Washington, D.C.

A recent story in The New Yorker says the retaliation against Richard Barlow stemmed from his work investigating Pakistan's nuclear-weapons capabilities.

"They tried to dismantle my entire life," Barlow said of his former employers in a recent telephone interview. "They went after my marriage. They destroyed my career and almost destroyed me financially."

U.S. Sen Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., last month asked the Pentagon to reopen its investigation into Barlow's charges. Repeated calls to the Pentagon for comment have gone unanswered.

The 38-year-old veteran of the Central Intelligence Agency, the Customs Service and the State Department's Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, as well as the Department of Defense, was a source for a story by Semour Hersh in the March 29 edition of The New Yorker.

Hersh wrote that Pakistan came close to using its nuclear arsenal against India in May of 1990, yet top U.S. officials kept this from Congress and the public because they wanted to keep Pakistan as an ally against the Soviet-backed government in Afghanistan.

Hersh, who first reported on the killing of civilians in the Vietnamese village of My Lai in 1969, described Barlow as smart, committed and having "a tremendous capacity for absorbing information."

"Barlow looked the part: slender, with hazel eyes, light-brown hair, and a movie star's profile," Hersh wrote. "And yet he also was very much unlike the public image of the hard-nosed CIA men; he was openly enthusiastic, and exuded an energetic reverence for his work and its responsibility."

Hersh quotes several members of

the intelligence community who say Barlow was a brilliant analyst and that his charges that Pakistani purchases of nuclear materials were withheld from Congress are true.

Former CIA deputy director Richard Kerr told Hersh that Barlow "brought the agency a unique skill ... a different kind of skill from the kind we had historically used." Yet Kerr added that Barlow bordered on zealotry: "When others disagreed with his analysis he made it a matter of integrity, as opposed to a matter of judgment."

Barlow told the Journal that it would be inappropriate to describe his work for the Department of Defense, but added, "I was just doing my job." Yet, he said, his superiors wrongly branded him as an "intended whistle blower," launched a "massively, politically motivated investigation" into his and his former wife's life and suspended his security clearance.

Though he declined to be specific about the alleged harassment, he said the tactics were "as low as you could go."

Barlow said that by the time of the Pakistani-Indian confrontation, he had been reassigned to mundane chores like arranging luncheons at the Pentagon.

He said he ultimately resigned from the Department of Defense.

Washington attorney Paul C. Warnke, an assistant defense secretary in the Johnson administration and chief arms-control negotiator for President Carter, has agreed to represent Barlow for free, Barlow said. Warnke did not respond to calls to his office.

According to Hersh's article, Warnke has assembled evidence indicating that a Pentagon report on Barlow included fabricated information. The document was not

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— Richard Barlow

made public, and the article did not name sources of the information. On March 17, Bingaman, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, formally asked the Pentagon to reopen the case, Hersh wrote.

Roberta Heine, a press aide to Bingaman, recently confirmed that the senator had written such a letter, but declined to disclose its contents.

Barlow said he hopes the story and Bingaman's effort will cause the Department of Defense to compensate him for the damage it has caused him.

"This kind of activity, in which the Department of Defense targets its own employees, the abuses of personnel and security and authority, have no place in our society," he said. "It's time to bring the Pentagon into the 1990s."

He said he moved to Santa Fe in October 1991 because he knew people here and because he wanted "to start a new life."

J.D. Arnold, owner of Rocky Mountain Tours, said Barlow worked for him on a consultant basis from May through September of 1992, driving the Coyote Express tour bus as well as doing public relations and research. Arnold said he was impressed with Barlow's intelligence-agency background — which was included on Barlow's

resume — but added: "I don't think he was suited for the kind of work he was doing here."

"I felt he was extremely troubled by things in his past," Arnold said.

City Councilor Peso Chavez recalled that Barlow applied for a job with Chavez's private-detective firm. Chavez said he didn't think Barlow's national-security background was suited for local investigations.

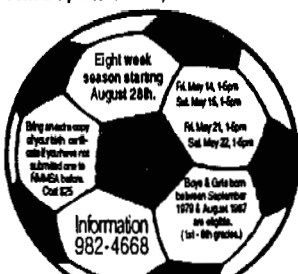
"It was pretty hard for me to understand why he would be doing what he was doing," Chavez said.

Barlow, who lives on the south side of Santa Fe, said he recently began doing analysis for a firm which he would not identify. He declined to be photographed for this article.

"It would be hard for most people to imagine the terror and pain of becoming the target of mistaken DOD activities which bore a remarkable similarity to those of the KGB," Barlow said. "Some very high-level people in the Pentagon were involved in this and they should be brought to justice or they will do it again."

"The morale of the story is that nuclear proliferation is perhaps the most serious threat to our national security today," he said. "It is vital that all elements of the U.S. government cooperate to counter this threat."

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