

6-7-75
NYT

Rockefeller Gives Ford Report on C.I.A.

President Is Undecided on Making It Public

By NICHOLAS M. HORROCK
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 6—President Ford received today a sweeping report on Central Intelligence Agency activities amid doubts on whether it would be made public and contradictions about the handling of the investigation of alleged assassination plots against foreign leaders.

In a brief ceremony for photographers in the President's White House office, Vice President Rockefeller delivered a blue-bound, 1 1/2-inch-thick volume of 299 pages detailing the findings of a special commission to investigate certain activities of the C.I.A.

Despite week-long indications from Administration officials that the report might be made public as early as this weekend, the White House press secretary, Ron Nessen, said that the President would read the report over the weekend and then decide whether to make it public.

The commission, Mr. Rockefeller told the President, did not have time to review the assassination attempts, but we will turn over to you the information we've gathered.

Meanwhile, authoritative intelligence and Administration

Continued on Page 58, Column 3

Delay in Publishing Data Threatens to Diminish Credibility of Findings

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 6—The decision today by President Ford to delay indefinitely the publication of Vice President Rockefeller's report on activities of the Central Intelligence Agency raised the clear possibility that the outcome of the five-month-long White House inquiry would be the opposite of what had been intended.

The President had hoped to assure the nation, as he noted in accepting the blue-bound report of Mr. Rockefeller's blue-ribbon commission this morning, that the intelligence community would operate "within the law."

But the White House announcement that the report would not be made public until Mr. Ford had read it—if then—and the circumstances surrounding the presentation of the report by Mr. Rockefeller threatened to diminish the credibility of the commission's findings when they did emerge.

The transmittal ceremony in the President's Oval Office occurred amid reports that the White House had ordered Mr. Rockefeller to delete from his commission's findings a long section dealing with charges of C.I.A. involvement in plots to assassinate foreign leaders.

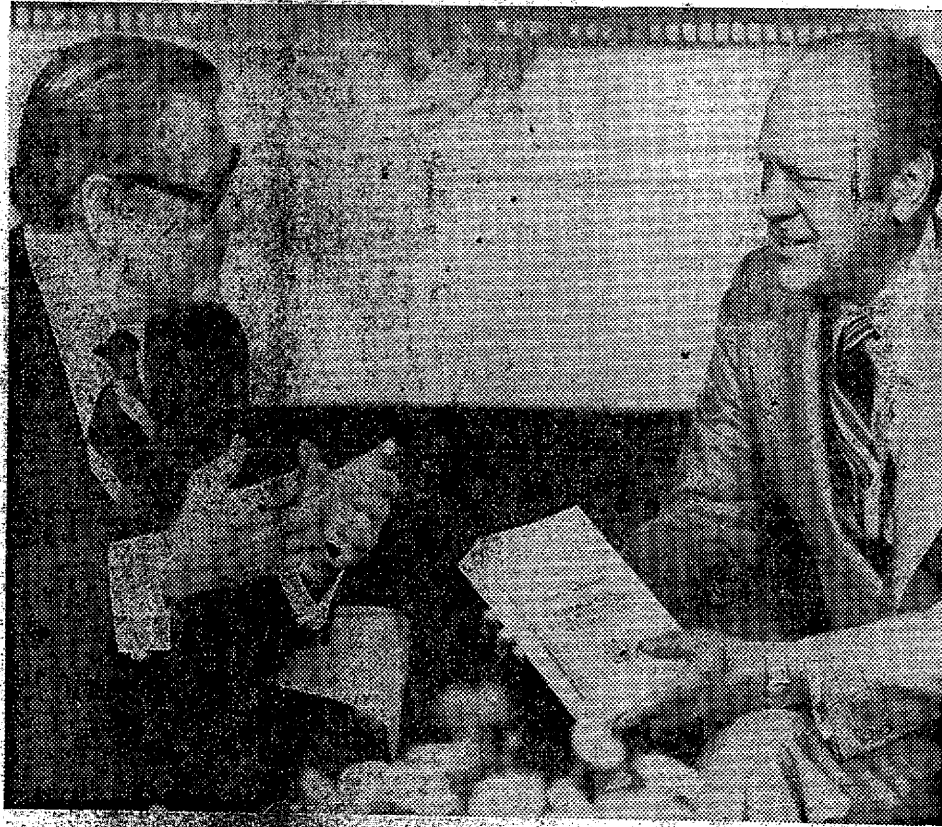
Mr. Rockefeller insisted that it had never been meant to include the subject in the commission's formal published findings. Ron Nessen, the White House press secretary, strenuously denied that Mr. Ford or his aides had any involvement in shaping the commission's report.

But their statements appeared to conflict with earlier ones. Moreover, spokesmen for the White House and the commission kept referring questions to one another, and neither gave a satisfactory explanation for the abandonment of the commission's plans to make the report public this weekend.

The situation produced the most acrimonious White House news briefing since Mr. Ford was elevated to the Presidency last August. Some reporters questioned Mr. Nessen about a possible "cover-up" attempt. One newsman called the Presidential spokesman a liar. Mr. Nessen, unable to divert the focus of his daily briefing to other subjects, stalked angrily from the White House briefing room.

At issue were seeming inconsistencies or, at best, uncertainties in the culmination of the Rockefeller commission's in-

Continued on Page 58, Column 4



President Ford holds the report on C.I.A. given to him by Vice President Rockefeller

Associated Press

New York Times

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 1975

Price higher in air delivery cities.

Delay in Publishing Report on C.I.A. May Diminish Credibility

Continued From Page 1, Col. 6

quity.
Mr. Rockefeller told the President in a conversation presumably meant to be overheard by White House correspondents that the commission had omitted any reference to the alleged assassination plots because "we did not have time" to complete a review of them.

Mr. Ford extended the life of the commission from three months to five after the alleged assassination plots became known in March. Neither Mr. Nessen nor the commission's spokesman had an explanation for the decision to disband the panel without completing the assassination inquiry rather than to seek a second extension if more time was needed.

Mr. Rockefeller said this morning that the commission had intended all along to present its findings on the assassination charges in a separate private report to Mr. Ford. But C. Douglas Dillon, the commission's vice chairman, told reporters two weeks ago that the published findings would

contain a section on the charges. Senior intelligence officials were known to have expected, as late as yesterday, that the matter would be covered in the published report.

The discrepancies left unsettled which, if any, of three plausible explanations for the deletion of the material might be correct. Some Administration officials suggested privately that the White House had been troubled by the inclusion of classified information in a draft of the commission report and had prevailed on the panel to keep it secret.

A second theory being offered was that Mr. Ford did not wish to make public unsubstantiated inferences that President Kennedy had been a party to C.I.A. planning to assassinate Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba — either because the evidence was inconclusive or because it would be more advisable to let the commission's own reports of Congressional don't regard murder plots as a minor matter."

Mr. Rockefeller told reporters on Monday that his panel had found violations of law by the agency, but that in comparison to the total effort they are not major. Senator Church, an Idaho Democrat, said Wednesday that he had heard "hard evidence" of more than one C.I.A. scheme to kill a foreign leader and added, "I don't regard murder plots as a minor matter."

A third possible explanation being discussed, and specifically denied by Mr. Nessen, is that the Congressional investigation might produce hard evidence that would make an inconclusive report from Mr. Rockefeller's panel appear to have been a whitewash.

The decision to issue a White House commission report without reference to the assassination inquiry was not made known until last night following a public dispute between Mr. Rockefeller and Senator Frank Church, the chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities, over the extent of possible misconduct by the C.I.A.

Mr. Rockefeller told reporters on Monday that his panel had found violations of law by the agency, but that in comparison to the total effort they are not major. Senator Church, an Idaho Democrat, said Wednesday that he had heard "hard evidence" of more than one C.I.A. scheme to kill a foreign leader and added, "I don't regard murder plots as a minor matter."

Mr. Nessen described the President's copy as a set of "page proofs" — a printed, rather than typed, version. One White House official said that Mr. Ford's announced intention to supply Senator Church with a copy of the private commission findings on the assassination charges proved that no cover-up was intended. But this did not dispel the

The White House refusal to issue the report now, as the commission had intended, appeared to bolster the suggestion that it had been redrafted and thus could not be duplicated in sufficient quantity before next week at the earliest. Mr. Nessen insisted today that "the one and only copy of the full report is in the hands of the President," and that the White House had never intended to permit its duplication until Mr. Ford had read it. But well-placed officials said that a number of printed copies of the report had been produced at the Government Printing Office.

Mr. Nessen described the President's copy as a set of "page proofs" — a printed, rather than typed, version. One White House official said that Mr. Ford's announced intention to supply Senator Church with a copy of the private commission findings on the assassination charges proved that no cover-up was intended. But this did not dispel the

open cynicism with which White House correspondents, who had been assured after Watergate of an open Ford Administration, greeted Mr. Nessen's statement today that "the White House has no idea what has transpired" in a commission chaired by the Vice President.

Many of the questions put to Mr. Nessen seemed hostile and many of his replies seemed evasive. One reporter told Mr. Nessen that he acted as if the Rockefeller Commission were "some foreign country" with which communication was difficult. Another newsman muttered, and then at Mr. Nessen's request said aloud, that he wondered if former President Richard M. Nixon had been "consulted on this cover-up."

Twice rebuffed in efforts to guide the briefing to less volatile subjects, Mr. Nessen ultimately slammed shut his thick binder of briefing notes, strode from the briefing room and declared through assistants that he was too busy to meet with correspondents for the rest of the day.

Mr. Nessen described the President's copy as a set of "page proofs" — a printed, rather than typed, version. One White House official said that Mr. Ford's announced intention to supply Senator Church with a copy of the private commission findings on the assassination charges proved that no cover-up was intended. But this did not dispel the

open cynicism with which White House correspondents, who had been assured after Watergate of an open Ford Administration, greeted Mr. Nessen's statement today that "the White House has no idea what has transpired" in a commission chaired by the Vice President.

Many of the questions put to Mr. Nessen seemed hostile and many of his replies seemed evasive. One reporter told Mr. Nessen that he acted as if the Rockefeller Commission were "some foreign country" with which communication was difficult. Another newsman muttered, and then at Mr. Nessen's request said aloud, that he wondered if former President Richard M. Nixon had been "consulted on this cover-up."

Twice rebuffed in efforts to guide the briefing to less volatile subjects, Mr. Nessen ultimately slammed shut his thick binder of briefing notes, strode from the briefing room and declared through assistants that he was too busy to meet with correspondents for the rest of the day.

ROCKEFELLER GIVES REPORT TO FORD

Continued From Page 1, Col. 4

sources said that the staff of the Rockefeller Commission had prepared two drafts of a section on the assassination issue, but said that they were not included in the final report after White House officials said that there was significant evidence in Federal Government files that the commission had not dealt with.

These sources said that the commission staff was too small and its mandate too narrow to handle the numerous charges that the United States Government might have plotted to kill leaders of foreign Governments.

Several officials, speaking privately, said that President Ford might appoint a separate panel to investigate the matter of assassinations. Others said that the White House might decide to leave the responsibility for investigating the matter with the Congressional committee now studying the intelligence agencies.

Mr. Rockefeller told reporters today, for instance, that the responsibility for investigating the assassination questions might pass to Senator Frank Church and the members of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities.

Up to White House

The Senate committee has already begun a full-scale inquiry in the matter and today heard testimony from a former director of the C.I.A., John McCone, in closed session. Later, Mr. McCone told newsmen that high officials in the Administrations of Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy had authorized "actions" against Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba. He said that they had been aborted.

Later, Mr. Church told newsmen that the question of plots against leaders of foreign countries was not confined to Mr. Castro.

Questions about the handling of the investigation of assassination charges and whether the commission's findings on the C.I.A. would be made public have swirled through Washington for several days.

Earlier this week, Mr. Rockefeller announced that his commission's report would be

turned over to the President today, and his aides said that they believed that it would be made public shortly after. The commission spokesmen, however, stressed that the decision was up to the White House.

Nevertheless, many major news organizations were told privately that the report might be released by the weekend.

But today, in a briefing for reporters, the White House press secretary, Ron Nessen, said that the President would read the report over the weekend, and the decision about whether to release it would be made next week.

The briefing was described by several newsmen as the most acrimonious since the Nixon White House.

Mr. Nessen said that to his knowledge, the only bound copy of the report was in the hands of the President. But sources at the Rockefeller Commission said that there were three bound copies, including the one the President had, and 20 typewritten copies in the hands of commission members and staff. They also said that "a number" of proofs of the report had been given to the commission for the checking of errors.

The commission had originally planned to print and bind 3,000 copies of its report.

Mr. Nessen told reporters that it was untrue that the White House had rejected the original report and ordered it rewritten. He also denied that Philip Buchen, White House counsel, had seen a pre-copy of the report.

"The one and only copy of the full report is in the hands of the President," Mr. Nessen said.

However, other authoritative Administration and intelligence sources gave this account of events.

Last May 12, C. Douglas Dillon, vice chairman of the Rockefeller Commission, told newsmen in a routine briefing that the commission had been ordered by President Ford to investigate reports of assassination plans, and that the commission intended to cover the question in its report.

At the time, the commission's 12-man staff under David W. Belin, former Warren Commission counsel, was stretched thin, and Mr. Belin was attempting to press the assassination matter almost singlehandedly.

During the last 10 days of May, the commission prepared draft copies of a section summarizing its findings on assassinations and circulated them among the commission members and several White House officials. One source said that C.I.A. officials might also have seen the draft.

When it reached the desk of White House aides, several of them recognized that it was based primarily on information from C.I.A. files, and that files of several other Federal agencies contained pertinent data that the commission staff had not delved into.

Other Questions Raised

Moreover, one source said, "the charges were coming so fast in the press that the commission had not even been able to check out some of those." Indeed, Maj. Gen. Edward G. Lansdale told reporters last week that he had prepared plans to depose Premier Castro that might later have been expanded to include the option of "assassination," but he said that he had not been questioned about this by the Rockefeller Commission.

In the last week of May, the

decision was made to not attempt to draw formal conclusions in the final report.

What has confused the situation have been the public statements of the Vice President. Last Monday, he gave no hint to reporters that the assassination issue would be left out of the final report. Indeed, during the week, a commission spokesman confirmed, Mr. Rockefeller told one group of reporters that the report would address the issue of assassinations.

But, the spokesman explained, the Vice President meant that there would be a brief note in the report telling the President that the commission had begun an investigation of assassination matters, but that it had not completed it and was turning over the raw data.

Other questions were raised. Why didn't the commission ask for more time to complete its investigation? It had received one time extension of two months to make the initial foray into the assassination question.

The commission spokesman said that the only reason he knew was that the staff was made up of private lawyers, many of whom wanted to re-

turn to private life. The commission officially went out of business today, he said.

There was also the question of what several sources suggested was a "shrinkage" in the size of the report. On Monday, Mr. Rockefeller told newsmen that the report would run some 350 printed pages. But the final version, a spokesman said, was 299 pages. He said that the 350-page estimate has been made before the type was set.

Mr. Belin declined to comment on any aspects of the preparation of the report, but said that next week "as a private citizen" he might make a statement on the handling of the investigation.

Meanwhile, on Capitol Hill, Representative Lucien N. Nedzi, chairman of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, was quoted as saying that he would not step down from the chairmanship of the committee despite a revolt by a majority of the committee's Democrats.

Yesterday, a majority of the Democrats told House Speaker Carl Albert, Democrat of Oklahoma, that they wanted to oust the chairman, also a Democrat, on the ground that he could not conduct an impartial investigation.