

HELMS DISAVOWS 'ILLEGAL' SPYING BY THE C.I.A. IN U.S.

Alleged Domestic Operation
Under His Stewardship Is
'Categorically Denied'

AGENCY AIDE DISSENTS

Angleton, Who Is Resigning
His Post, Is Said to Agree

With Some Allegations

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24—The State Department said today that Richard Helms, former Director of Central Intelligence and now the Ambassador to Iran, had categorically denied that the C.I.A. conducted any "illegal" domestic spying under his leadership.

But James Angleton, who is resigning as chief of the Counterintelligence Department and who has been publicly linked to the spying, was quoted today as saying that he agreed with some of the allegations that were published Sunday by The New York Times.

There is "something to it," Mr. Angleton told United Press International.

His resignation, effective at the end of the month, became known last night.

Meantime, Representative Lucien N. Nedzi, chairman of the Intelligence subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, said in a television interview this morning, "There's been an overstepping of bounds" by the C.I.A.

Controversy Grows

"You might call it illegalities in terms of exceeding their charter," Mr. Nedzi, Democrat of Michigan, said.

The denial from Mr. Helms was reported by Robert Anderson, State Department spokesman, as controversy continued to grow over the domestic spying allegations.

The spokesman said that Mr. Helms, who he said had left Iran on a prearranged home leave that will bring him to Washington early next month, had telegraphed his denial in response to Secretary of State Kissinger's request for a report.

Mr. Anderson, quoting from the telegram, said, "Ambassador Helms has categorically denied that under his stewardship the C.I.A. conducted illegal domestic operations against anti-war activists or dissidents, or that any unit to do such was created under him as director."

Mr. Anderson said that he had no further information.

The press spokesman also announced that Secretary Kissinger was expected to receive a report on the alleged domestic spying from William E. Colby, the current Director of Central Intelligence, and would forward it to President Ford, who is on vacation at Vail, Colo. Mr. Ford ordered yesterday that the report be made "within a matter of days."

Massive Operation

A State Department official said this evening that the Colby report had been submitted to Mr. Kissinger at the close of the working day and would be sent to Vail on the next White House courier flight.

The Times reported Sunday that, according to well-placed Government sources, the C.I.A. had violated its charter by mounting a massive, illegal intelligence operation during the Nixon Administration against the antiwar movement and other dissident groups in the United States. Intelligence files on at least 10,000 American citizens were compiled, the sources said. Well-informed sources said that Mr. Colby met with Mr. Angleton last Friday and

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requested that he end his 31-year intelligence career.

In a telephone interview this morning, Mr. Angleton, who said that he had not slept the previous night, accused The Times of "helping out the K.G.B. [Soviet intelligence and internal security service] a great deal" by publishing his name and title in its Sunday dispatch.

"You've done them a great favor," he said.

Mr. Angleton did not deny, however, that he had been named and identified by a British counterspy, Kim Philby, in "My Silent War," a book published in 1968 after he defected to the Soviet Union.

Asked about alleged wrongdoing, Mr. Angleton said, "I've got problems." He explained his domestic activities this way:

"A mansion has many rooms, and there were many things going on during the period of the [antiwar] bombings. I'm not privy to who struck John."

Mr. Angleton, who had been in charge of rooting out foreign espionage agents in the United States, later permitted newsmen from three television networks to interview him.

Asked for reasons for the resignations, he was quoted as saying: "Police state . . . Soviet bloc . . . fragmentation . . . I had a son in the infantry in Vietnam. Went from private to corporal."

Asked whether his son had been wounded, he reportedly said, "No. I think he's O.K."

A number of present and former C.I.A. officials expressed pleasure at the resignation of Mr. Angleton.

Mr. Nedzi's televised interview marked the first public confirmation that any domestic wrongdoing had been committed by the C.I.A.

A Question Remains

"But the question of whether there's any ground for criminal prosecution still remains," Mr. Nedzi added. "I'm not aware of anything in the statute which set up the agency that provides for criminal sanctions."

Mr. Nedzi, who is known to have discussed the domestic spying allegations last week with Mr. Colby, said "The information which was given me does not square with the information that has appeared in the allegations and the wider implications of the stories that are circulating presently."

There was some "overstepping of bounds," Mr. Nedzi said, "but it certainly wasn't of the dimension that we're led to believe when we draw the intended implications, as I see it, of what has appeared in the newspapers and in the media."

He said that he planned to call Mr. Colby to testify at hearings into the C.I.A.'s alleged domestic activities.

Additional hearings were announced today by Senator Edmund S. Muskie, Democrat of Maine, whose Senate Government Operations Subcommittee met earlier this month to hear testimony about revamping Congressional oversight of the C.I.A.

Mr. Muskie said that he planned to initiate discussions early next week with Senator John C. Stennis, Democrat of Mississippi, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, to determine whether his subcommittee could share access to classified intelligence material, which traditionally has been supplied only to the Stennis panel.

"There's really nothing in the Senate rules that excludes other committees from access to this information," the Senator said.

Special Prosecutor Urged

A call for the appointment of former Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson as a special independent prosecutor to investigate the C.I.A. spying charges was made today by Representative Paul Findley, Republican of Illinois, who is a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

In a letter to President Ford, Mr. Findley said that neither denial of the charges by present and former C.I.A. officials nor an internal inquiry by the executive branch would dispel doubts about the agency's domestic activities.

"So tainted has the C.I.A. become that nothing will suffice short of a full-scale investigation and criminal prosecutions where they are warranted," he said.

He praised Mr. Richardson, who was recently named Ambassador to England by Mr. Ford, for his "reputation for strict adherence to the laws and his unwillingness to back out on a public commitment."

Mr. Richardson resigned as Attorney General rather than carry out an order from President Nixon to dismiss the first Watergate special prosecutor, Archibald Cox.

An Admission Reported

Daniel Schorr, a correspondent for CBS News, reported tonight that during a four-hour conversation with reporters Mr. Angleton "admitted keeping files on Americans like Black Panthers and antiwar demonstrators, but only after they'd contacted agents abroad."

Mr. Angleton denied, according to Mr. Schorr, any specific C.I.A. wiretapping or break-ins, "but indicated the F.B.I. was asked to conduct some to help protect C.I.A. sources and methods."