

Ford Seen Fearful of Baring Alleged CIA Role in Killings

Associated Press

President Ford reportedly has told associates that if current investigations of the CIA "go too far" they could uncover its involvement in several assassinations of foreign officials, CBS News said last night.

CBS Washington correspondent Daniel Schorr said at least three assassinations reportedly are involved and that they are thought to have taken place in the 1960s or late 1950s.

The President reportedly said that if they are disclosed, "this would embarrass the government and damage relations with at least one foreign country," Schorr said.

Schorr reported that the

assassinations were said to have been uncovered by Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger in his previous post as CIA director when he asked CIA employees in May, 1973, to report to him any questionable CIA activities they knew about. Schlesinger banned any further use of assassination in August, 1973, Schorr said.

Mr. Ford reportedly learned of the assassinations after a New York Times report last December of CIA domestic surveillance. Mr. Ford ask CIA director William E. Colby for a report on the domestic activities and "other potential minefields."

Schorr said Colby told the President about the assassinations. "Ford reportedly was

shocked by the killings and mentioned them internally as a reason for extreme caution and security in investigations of the CIA by the administration and Congress," Schorr said.

Four former high agency officials categorically denied any CIA involvement in the assassination of foreign leaders, although two of the former officials acknowledged that low-level proposals were made for assassinating Cuban Premier Fidel Castro and Dominican Republic dictator Rafael Trujillo.

"Some of the eager beavers down the line talked about these things, but none was ever carried out," one official said.

A former government official who worked on the internal CIA investigation that CBS said uncovered the activity told Associated Press: "We never had any indication whatsoever of CIA involvement in assassination."

The former official, who asked not to be identified, was an aide to former CIA director Schlesinger.

An agency spokesman refused all comment. And a White House spokesman said: "We have nothing to say about the report."