

FBI Memo on Data-Gathering Aired

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By Morton Mintz
Washington Post Staff Writer

The White House has acknowledged that an FBI memo on gathering intelligence for the President and the Attorney General "may have an ominous . . . sound" in one passage, but said that the sound disappears when the passage is read in context.

The special agent in charge of the FBI's office in Portland, Oreg., issued the memo on Jan. 21, 1971, to remind all agents of an FBI program, begun in 1969, to supply "high-level intelligence data in the security field to the President and the Attorney General on a continuing basis.

The material to be furnished," the memo said, "is not of a routine nature but rather that which has the qualities of importance and timeliness necessary to secure the President's interest and to

provide him with meaningful intelligence for his guidance. The bureau is not interested in mere rumors or nebulous information."

In a "not all inclusive" list of six categories of the types of information desired, the memo contained this disputed passage:

"(6) Items with an unusual twist or concerning prominent personalities which may be of special interest to the President and the Attorney General

"It is to be noted that the type of information desired in paragraph 6 may be obtained through investigations not wholly related to the security field."

A small publication, The Oregon Times, obtained a copy of the memo and sent it to Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wis.) with a request that he take it before a large public.

Last April 2, Aspin released a copy of the memo with an accompanying charge that the Nixon administration was "using the FBI as a political Peeping Tom and gossip columnist."

The congressman also sent a letter to President Nixon requesting him "to find out who on his staff is responsible for this perversion of the proper role of the FBI." Aspin asked for an immediate halt to the intelligence-gathering operation, identified in the letter with the name "Inlet."

Replying on April 21, Richard K. Cook, deputy assistant to the President, told Aspin that the purpose of "Inlet" was to "flag" and more easily identify non-routine information "which might be of special relevance to executive branch decision-making."

Cook said that "this was not an irregular operation aimed

at obtaining personal data on individuals outside the scope of the bureau's proper investigative functions . . . any information gathering beyond the scope of those functions would not be tolerated."