

Spies in White House

Allegations About C.I.A. Point Up Accepted Role of Capital 'Tattling'

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WASHINGTON, July 15—The Central Intelligence Agency has denied vigorously that it ever planted any spies in the executive mansion, and the White House insists there certainly

are none there now. But true or not, the allegations of C.I.A. penetration of the President's home and

office serve to illustrate a curious fact of life in bureaucratic Washington: the Government routinely "spies" on itself because knowledge is power. "The brutal truth," said a government veteran now serving in the White House, "is that knowing something first can give you tremendous leverage."

A cabinet member armed with foreknowledge of a President's view on a current policy issue can frame a position that will have minimum impact. And a bureaucrat able to advise a senior official on White House attitudes can enhance the bureaucrat's career prospects.

Mr. Prouty was quoted yesterday by The Springfield (Mass.) Daily News as saying that perhaps he had been given "the wrong name to cover up the real informer." The search for the facts was further complicated today when Mr. Prouty denied making such a statement.

The chairmen of Senate and House committees looking into C.I.A. activities have said they have no evidence now that the agency penetrated the White House in the sense that agents were working there on clandestine assignments. The matter remains under investigation, however.

So does an allegation, reportedly supported by a 1973 report of the C.I.A. Inspector General, that agents of the C.I.A. infiltrated the now-defunct Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs with the approval of Bureau and Justice Department executives but without the knowledge of Federal narcotics agents.

The C.I.A., like the State and Defense Departments and other agencies, routinely assigns individuals to work in the White House and various departments in roles related to their intelligence gathering function. What remained at issue was whether these and other indi-

viduals might be performing intelligence agency duties without the knowledge of their superiors in the White House and Cabinet departments.

One government official, while neither confirming nor denying these suggestions, said that the image of C.I.A. personnel working in Mata Hari style in the White House might stem from confusion about agency problems. The official, insisting on anonymity, said that he had acted as an agency "contact officer" while working in the White House. But he said that amounted to no more than providing informal guidance to agency who asked from time to time about policy attitudes.

Accordingly, say those who have been both bureaucrats and White House officials, intramural spying — "tattling" or "coordination" are words they would prefer — has become a government commonplace and will likely remain so.

Presidents trying to gain control of entrenched bureaucracies seed agencies with loyal allies who will report back on the extent to which White House policy directives are being honored.

Conversely, agencies asked to assign personnel to work in the White House respond enthusiastically, secure in the knowledge that a bureaucrat's loyalty will often run more to the old agency than to the

waste basket.

No one has yet established the facts of the alleged C.I.A. infiltration of the White House. L. Fletcher Prouty, a retired Air Force colonel who once was a liaison officer with the intelligence agency, charged last week that Alexander P. Butterfield had been a C.I.A. "contact officer" in the Nixon White House. The agency, the White House and Mr. Butterfield all denied it.

Whether anyone in the White House acted as an "informer" in the classic Mata Hari sense apparently was at issue. One government official, insisting on anonymity, said today that he had performed as a C.I.A. "contact officer" while working in the White House. The official said that amounted, however, to no more than providing informal guidance to acquaintances in the intelligence agency who asked from time to time about policy attitudes in the executive mansion.

Other officials described such practices as neither surprising nor alarming and said they were an unavoidable consequence of bureaucratic oneness.

To a bureaucrat, said one, it can be "critical information" to determine how much room for maneuvering exists in a given policy debate. Thus, the aide said, it is common for a White House official with ties

new President.

Both practices can go amok, with embarrassing or worse consequences. Documents showing the attempt by the Nixon White House to make the Internal Revenue Service "politically responsive" were disclosed during the Watergate investigations and formed part of the grounds for seeking the impeachment of Mr. Nixon for abuse of power.

Similarly, testimony last year before the Senate Armed Services Committee showed how Charles E. Radford, a young Navy yeoman assigned as a National Security Council clerk, kept the Pentagon advised of what Henry A. Kissinger, now Secretary of State, had in his White House briefcase and

to a government agency to be asked, "Where do we stand on this before I send such-and-such paper to the White House?"

According to another well-place official, "the more highly structured [is] the advancement system of an agency, the stronger is the tie binding a temporary White House aide to that agency. Thus military officials, whose career advancement will depend on judgments of superiors in the Pentagon, are said to be more prone to pressure for inside information."

Similarly, the official said, advocates of particular government programs are likely to feed strategic information to an agency promoting that program within the Administration. "People who are bright enough to get transferred from an agency to the White House are generally zealots about one thing or another," he said.

The routine acceptance of intragovernment tattling may be illustrated by two matters involving Secretary of State Kissinger. Although frowned upon officially, the spying on Mr. Kissinger by yeoman Radford was hushed up initially and no formal action was taken against the yeoman or his superiors at the Pentagon.

When a reporter for the tabloid National Enquirer took a similar case to the White House, the press secretary said that the Secretary was "revolted" by the act and that Mrs. Kissinger was suffering "grave anguish."