

CIA Detailed Personnel to White House

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A secret 1973 report on Central Intelligence Agency abuses listed the assignment of CIA employees to the White House as one of the questionable practices that might be discontinued, it was disclosed yesterday.

According to the report by the CIA inspector general's office, the spy agency had for many years detailed CIA personnel "to the immediate office of the White House and to components intimately associated with the office of the President . . ."

The charges of CIA "infiltration" of the White House stemming from the disclosure centered yesterday on reports that Alexander Butterfield, who disclosed the existence of President Nixon's Watergate tapes, had been a White House "contact man" with the agency.

Former Defense Department intelligence officer L. Fletcher Prouty told reporters that Butterfield was identified to him as the CIA's White House liaison in the spring of 1971 by several individuals, including former CIA agent E. Howard Hunt Jr., who was later arrested and convicted in the Watergate scandal.

Prouty added that Butterfield was not a CIA "spy" as far as he knew and that he did not know whether Butterfield had ever worked for the CIA.

The CIA denied that Butterfield had ever been one of its employees, and added in a statement that "he has never been assigned to or worked for CIA in any capacity."

The Ford administration, meanwhile, became more cautious in the face of the new controversy over alleged CIA "infiltration" of the White House and other

executive agencies in the past.

Departing with the President for Traverse City, Mich., White House press secretary Ron Nessen told reporters that he had no reason to believe anyone at the Ford White House had a secret CIA connection or that anyone on the White House staff was surreptitiously funneling information on White House activities to any other government agency.

Nessen emphasized that he was speaking "only for this administration and this President" and officials of other administrations could best speak for themselves.

On Thursday, Nessen had stated categorically that none of the CIA personnel now at the White House was working "in any hidden or undercover role, and I have been told in the past there never has been."

Yesterday, however, Nes-

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sen said the questions that have been raised apply to previous administrations and "those questions could thus be addressed to those

who were involved in the administrations."

He added, "We have no reason to believe there ever has been such an agent, but I want to make clear that I speak only for his adminis-

tration and this President."

The furor started Wednesday, when members of the House intelligence committee said they had been told by their staff director, Searle Field, of evidence in secret CIA documents of "infiltration" of the White House, including a high-level aide under President Nixon.

Committee Chairman Lucier N. Nedzi (D-Mich.) told reporters yesterday that he knew of no such infiltration, but was not in a position to rule it out. He said the allegations were apparently based on a section of the 1973 CIA inspector general's report, entitled "Detailed Personnel," citing the assignment of CIA workers to the White House and other agencies, such as the Treasury Department, the Commerce Department and the Agency for International Development.

The White House units where CIA workers were assigned at the time of the May 21, 1973, report included the Council on International Economic Policy, the President's Foreign Advisory Board and the White House communications section.

Nedzi said that as he understood it, the CIA assigned workers to the White House and other agencies primarily to supply requested expertise. But he said another key reason for the loans to the White House staff, which are made by other government agencies as well, was to give the chief executive a bigger staff despite the limits of congressional authorization bills.

He said he thought the practice questionable on that score alone.

"This is something that deserves to be looked into, Nedzi said. "But the point is, dammit, that you shouldn't characterize these things without looking into them."

Prouty, once a Pentagon liaison officer who delt closely with the CIA, first for the Air Force and then

for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the spy agency had "thousands" of contacts in the government, some of whom were actually CIA employees and others, like himself, who were not.

"You never know," he said. "I've been called CIA

many times, but I say I'm not."

A retired Air Force colonel, Prouty said Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr. also served as the Army's CIA "contact man" in the early 1960s while working under a "cover arrangement" in the Army general counsel's office.

"He was doing for the Army what I was doing for the Joint Chiefs of Staff," Prouty said. "I know . . . because I worked with him."

Prouty retired from the military in 1963 and said he did not know whether Haig, who later became Nixon's White House chief of staff, continued his work with the spy agency after that.