

Penalties for Leaks Under Study, CIA Chief Says

3/10/77

By Lee Lescaze
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Carter said yesterday, he favors minimizing the use of criminal penalties against government officials who disclose classified information.

Carter's news conference comment came shortly after Adm. Stansfield Turner, the director of central intelligence, told reporters the subject "is under great study and scrutiny."

Turner said he discussed the government's options at a meeting with Attorney General Griffin B. Bell on Tuesday.

"What we need is that there be some effective sanction to prevent the release of sensitive information," Turner said.

He suggested that one possibility would be revision of the Espionage Act which is "not very effective" because it is 60 years old.

Tremor Hits Singapore

SINGAPORE, March 9.—Hundreds of people fled from high-rise apartment buildings when a slight earthquake shook Singapore today. A Meteorological Department spokesman said the tremor was caused by an earthquake off the west coast of the Indonesian island of Sumatra about 100 miles from here.

A new act with criminal penalties or a new code calling for civil penalties are other possibilities, the head of the intelligence community said. He said that there are six or seven bills pending in Congress dealing with the problem of unauthorized disclosure.

Last week, Vice President Mondale said he is "personally opposed" to establishing criminal penalties.

"There are other penalties that can be used without criminal charges and I think that Vice President Mondale drew that distinction," Carter said at his press conference.

Interest in the subject was kindled by The Washington Post's disclosure that Jordan's King Hussein had received millions of dollars over 20 years from the CIA for personal and intelligence uses.

Turner said publication of the story hurt U.S. relations not only with Jordan but with much of the world." He said that trust in U.S. ability to do business in confidence was damaged.

He said that the CIA is investigating the Hussein leak. "We think we have some indications, but not enough to take any disciplinary action," Turner said.

He said that he will review all covert payments, including the ones to Hussein which have been stopped, to see how many of them can be trans-

formed into overt operations.

On other subjects, Turner told a breakfast meeting with reporters that he has regularly scheduled meetings with President Carter and has been promised direct access to him whenever he needs it.

In his four days on the job before yesterday, Turner said he met twice with Carter for 30 to 35 minutes each time.

Office Building as well as his office at CIA headquarters.

He said he plans to work on problems concerning the entire intelligence community at his downtown office. His four days have been evenly divided between his two offices.

Turner said, but he does not know if that division of his time will continue. Turner was asked about Cuban President Fidel Castro's animosity toward the CIA.

"If Castro feels that my organization is a major thorn, I'll certainly look into whether that's necessary," he replied, "but the interests of this country come first."

He said that he had asked his subordinates whether a government prosecution of former CIA Director Richard Helms would pose a threat to national security. They told him it would, because of documents that would be made public at a trial.

Carter told his news conference that the decision whether to prosecute Helms would be made by the Justice Department and the decision what papers to make public would be his.

Unlike his predecessors, Turner will maintain an office in the Executive

Yesterday afternoon, Carter went to CIA headquarters to watch Turner be sworn in by Supreme Court Justice Byron R. White, Turner's predecessor, George Bush, and Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii), who heads the Senate Intelligence Committee, also attended.

On the Soviet Union, Turner said he believes "they are thinking in 19th Century terms of translating military power into political power."

Because they are far behind the United States economically and in technology, and because their "ideology is dying," Turner said, they are trying to make up for these shortcomings by military development.

He said that Soviet defense spending alarms him and that they aim at becoming the dominant world power.

"I don't think they (the Soviet Union) will make any agreement that doesn't have an offsetting political advantage," Turner said in response to a question on arms control. He said that such an agreement could also be advantageous for the United States.