

INTELLIGENCE

The Pandora's Box at the FBI

Many Congressmen were already aroused by charges that the Central Intelligence Agency had spied illegally on Americans within the U.S. Last week they found cause for fresh—and personal—indignation: confirmation of recurring Washington suspicions that FBI files contain reports about the sex lives, drinking problems and other peccadilloes of many public figures, including some members of Congress. As a result, the Senate was expected to vote this week to set up an eleven-member select committee to investigate not only the CIA but the FBI and the entire U.S. intelligence community, which employs between 100,000 and 150,000 people and costs some \$6 billion a year.* Democratic Senator Alan Cranston of California said that the probe would cover “anything and everything, not only the illegal and unconstitutional, but also the unwise” activities of the agencies.

The fire storm over the FBI was set off by a *Washington Post* exposé that contained little new information about bureau practices under the late director J. Edgar Hoover, but quoted two of his former assistants, Cartha DeLoach and Louis B. Nichols, as confirming the existence of the files on Congressmen. FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley later denied that the information had been misused. But many on Capitol Hill suspected otherwise. Said Democratic Senator Gale McGee of Wyoming: “Obviously, it’s to be held in reserve for some kind of blackmail.” That apparently was not the case. Said one FBI man: “What Hoo-

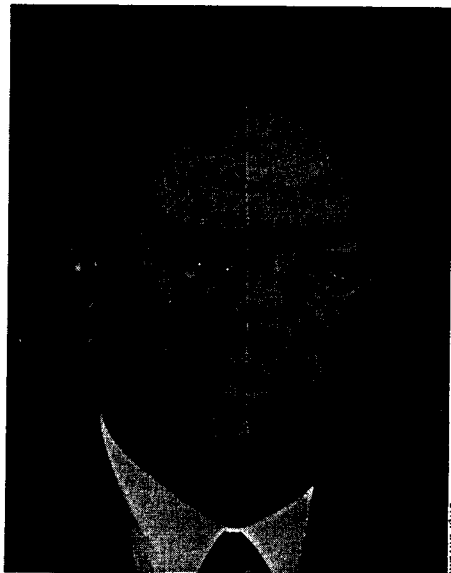
*Besides the CIA and the FBI, the community’s principal members are the Pentagon’s Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the Department of State’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research, the Air Force’s A-2, the Army’s G-2 and the Navy’s Office of Naval Intelligence.

ver did with that stuff may have been improper, but it certainly wasn’t blackmail.” It is known that Hoover often regaled Presidents and other high Government officials with salacious tidbits about Congressmen. On occasion, he also leaked damaging information to discredit officeholders whom he considered to be enemies.

Kelley maintained that the FBI had not pried into the private lives of Congressmen, except where they were being considered for federal jobs or were the subjects of criminal investigations. But he admitted that the FBI kept on hand raw data—much of them unsubstantiated rumors or absurd speculations—about the private activities of Congressmen and other public figures. Most of the data were collected in the course of unrelated criminal investigations or were received unsolicited from informants and private citizens.

Shredded Papers. Past and present FBI officials told *TIME* that some of the information came from the special agents in charge of several FBI field offices, who regularly dispatched reports to Hoover in sealed envelopes marked “personal and confidential.” Hoover kept them in his private office, though duplicates of most of the reports were placed in the FBI’s general files. After Hoover’s death, his secretary shredded his personal papers. But the official said that the secretary turned over 150 manila files, containing information on more than 250 public officials and others, to then Acting Associate FBI Director Mark W. Felt. His successor since 1973, Nicholas P. Callahan, declined to talk about the files.

Some of the material collected by the FBI was as sensational as it was spurious. It included reports that gamblers were



J. EDGAR HOOVER (1965)
Salacious tidbits.

paying off a Southern Senator; that three Senators were silent partners in a vending-machine firm that was linked with organized crime; that an Eastern Congressman had paid \$40,000 to extortionists who were preying on homosexuals; that the sometime boy friend of a past President’s daughter was a homosexual. Other files contained rumors about the reputed affairs of John and Robert Kennedy, of Eleanor Roosevelt, and of Richard Nixon, who was improbably said to have had a liaison with a Chinese woman in Hong Kong before he became President.

Outraged by the reports about the CIA and FBI activities, the Senate Democrats caucused last week. After hearing evidence that congressional oversight, particularly of the CIA, has been inadequate, the Democrats agreed, according to Adlai E. Stevenson III of Illinois, that “the danger of the police state is no longer unreal.” They voted 45 to 7 to recommend that the Senate set up a select com-



ON FILE: ELEANOR ROOSEVELT



RICHARD NIXON



JOHN & ROBERT KENNEDY

Probing the illegal, the unconstitutional, the unwise and the dangers of the police state.

THE NATION

mittee to investigate "the extent, if any, to which illegal, improper or unethical activities were engaged in by any agency" of the U.S. Government from the days of the cold war until the present.

Even before the full Senate had voted on the probe, Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott had decided that the G.O.P. members of the committee would be John G. Tower of Texas as vice chairman, plus Barry M. Goldwater of Arizona, Charles McC. Mathias Jr. of Maryland, Richard S. Schweiker of Pennsylvania and Howard H. Baker Jr. of Tennessee. As vice chairman of the Senate Watergate Committee, Baker made a special point of probing the CIA's involvement in that scandal. Majority Leader Mike Mansfield had not yet settled on his appointments or on his choice for committee chairman; among the likely candidates for the job were Philip A. Hart of Michigan and John O. Pastore of Rhode Island, even though Pastore disavowed any interest in it.

Full Analysis. There was no lack of Democratic candidates for the committee. Many looked on it as a way to enhance their own reputations, bearing out some of the worst fears of conservatives like Democrat John C. Stennis of Mississippi, who lamented: "The bird is out of the cage and gone." Stennis and some other Senators fear that a careless investigation may further damage the morale of the intelligence agencies, expose secrets, and even endanger undercover agents. Said he: "This is not comparable to Watergate. An agency of this kind can be destroyed." But Mansfield promised that the committee would conduct "neither witch hunt nor whitewash" but "a full and objective analysis of the role of intelligence gathering in a free society today, measured against current laws, practices and policies." Mansfield also assured his colleagues that "there will be no TV spectacles in any way, shape or form."

That seemed to mean that the Senate committee probably will conduct much if not all of its probe in secrecy, as has been done so far by President Gerald Ford's commission to investigate the CIA. Its chairman, Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, said last week that his group has "been given a broad picture" of the situation by CIA Director William E. Colby and his predecessors, and would next "go into details with [the CIA] staff." Asked if the commission had found "extensive illegal spying," Rockefeller cautiously replied: "I would not say that what you have just said would be the impression left so far." Nonetheless, the furor over the CIA, FBI and other intelligence-gathering agencies was not likely to end until the Senate committee finishes its probe by the Democrats' proposed deadline of Sept. 1. At the very least, the committee is expected to recommend better congressional oversight of the agencies and legislation to ensure that they stick to the purposes for which they were established.



FORD MEETS THE PRESS ON THE WHITE HOUSE DRIVEWAY

THE PRESIDENCY/HUGH SIDNEY

He Has Done His Homework

The country had a President last week, and it was such a novel experience that a lot of people were not sure what to make of it.

Gerald Ford was acting like a real leader. He was the only man in town with a complete economic and energy plan and, whether it will ultimately be judged good or bad, he was moving ahead with relish and considerable skill.

After attending about 100 solid hours of meetings on these matters over the past two months, consuming literally millions of written words on the intricate issues, Ford knew his subject matter better than his critics. That is considered unsportsmanlike conduct in these gaseous climes.

Carl Albert, the Speaker of the House, went to breakfast with reporters and was so mixed up about Ford's plan that he admitted he had not studied it.

"We're talking about thousands of little pieces of paper," Albert said at one point, believing that taxpayers would have to get receipts for gasoline and turn them in for tax rebates. No, no, said reporters, that wasn't the plan. "Well, how is he going to do that . . . I don't know," said Albert.

Ten Governors (eight of them Democrats) from the Northeastern states came to town breathing fire, claiming that the Ford energy tax would penalize their states. They circled around Ford in the Cabinet Room for what one claimed was "a very hard talking session." Massachusetts' Michael Dukakis was the toughest, boring in with a list of arguments against Ford's proposals. Finally, in a stern voice, he asked Ford, who sat across from him: "Have you considered the unfairness of what you are about to do?"

"I'm sorry," came back Ford, "I disagree with you . . . we've looked at every possible option. They were piled high . . . we were on the threshold of disaster . . . we have got to have action."

Ford looked Dukakis in the eye and hammered the table as he spoke. He listened to each one of the Governors as they made their complaints. The meeting ran 30 minutes beyond schedule, but Ford heard them all out. When it was over he went to his small study, and one of his aides murmured, "That was really rough." Ford showed no bitterness. "I've got to hear that," he said. "They've got their problems and I want to know about them."

But then Ford strode into the Oval Office to sign the very proclamation, to increase the oil-import fees, that the Governors had opposed. He made his short statement somberly, scribbled his lefthanded signature, then, looking up at the silent gallery of aides, newsmen and photographers, chuckled: "I don't see anybody clamoring for extra pens."

At that time the Governors were using the White House lawn to denounce the Ford plan before the television cameras. Again it was hard talk, but it was civilized, the kind of ritual on which good government thrives. Ford's ubiquitous staff members reported back to him what was happening out front. Rather than hide in his sanctum, the President decided to go out on the lawn and rebut the critics. Instantly, he had a driveway press conference going. "We've diddled and dawdled long enough," he said, clasping his hands behind his back. "We have to have an energy program . . . I think the American people want action . . . affirmative action, not negative action."

By the end of the day he was sitting in the family quarters of the White House, having just finished an hour of live-television questioning by NBC's John Chancellor and Tom Brokaw. The TV lights were out, the cameras dead, and the men were sipping Scotches. Ford was puffing his pipe and musing about the people who were going after him. Ford was handicapping each of the key men who would oppose him, determined to press his case in a democratic manner. It is such a sane and decent approach that it has already confounded a sizable segment of the opposition.