

Ford selections for CIA panel

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WASHINGTON — The White House on Monday defended President Ford's commission to investigate the Central Intelligence Agency against charges that a majority of the commission's members have CIA connections.

Press secretary Ron Nessen said, "All of these people have been checked. They would not have been picked if they had any connection with the CIA which would hamper them."

That represented a retreat from Nessen's statement Sunday, in announcing the commission, that all eight members were "without any affiliation with the CIA."

The Sun-Times and other newspapers subsequently pointed out that several of the members, including its chairman, Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller, have worked closely with the CIA.

Nessen acknowledged that



The CIA seal.

Rockefeller, as a member until last month of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, had considerable contact with the CIA. Nessen defended the connection as a "helpful" one that gave Rockefeller "some knowledge of how the CIA operates."

A spokesman for the board told The Sun-Times that "to the best of my knowledge" neither Rockefeller nor the other board members had been informed about any illegal CIA operations in the United States.

Disputing reports that Rock-

Controlling the CIA, an editorial, Page 25.

efeller had selected the commission, Nessen said "most of the names came from the President." He added that retired Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.), who led the Senate Watergate committee last year, and former Watergate special prosecutor Leon Jaworski both had been suggested to Ford as possible commission members but "were not seriously considered."

Administration sources said the selection was handled with much greater speed than normal and outside the regular procedures of the White House personnel office.

Creation of the commission originally was proposed by Sec. of State Henry A. Kissinger, a longtime Rockefeller associate who, as head of the National Security Council staff and the supersecret 40 Committee, is supposed to make

sure the CIA is following orders and the law.

Rockefeller promised to "leave no stone unturned" in pursuing the charges against the CIA.

Sen. Richard S. Schweiker (R-Pa.), reflecting a widespread feeling in Congress, said he seriously questioned "whether a panel so dominated by those oriented to the government and the military-intelligence establishment can render an independent judgment."

Nessen rejected suggestions that the commission was designed to head off a more thorough and open congressional investigation. He said Ford "favors a co-operative effort with Congress" which is proceeding with independent inquiries.

There have been proposals that the House and Senate set up Watergate-type committees to get to the bottom of charges that the CIA has been spying on private citizens and otherwise operating illegally in the United States.

So far the congressional investigations have been restricted to the House and Senate CIA oversight committees, which were advised of the allegations by CIA Director William E. Colby several months ago but did not move until the facts began to leak to the press.

Nessen said the commission's findings would be made public but no decision had yet been made on whether to disclose a report made by Colby to Ford last month. Nessen said the Colby report "raised enough questions to justify this commission investigation."

In the first day of the commission's existence, only two of its members — Erwin N. Griswold, former U.S. solicitor general, and former University of Virginia president Edgard F. Shannon Jr. — escaped criticism for having potentially compromising CIA connections or views. Of the

defended

trade drugs for the captured Bay of Pigs invaders of Cuba.

● Former Treasury Sec. C. Douglas Dillon was a key figure in intelligence activities as undersecretary of state in the Eisenhower administration. He personally authorized the cover story that was put out when the CIA's U-2 spy plane was downed over the Soviet Union in 1960.

Later, after leaving the government, Dillon chaired a closed-door meeting of the Council on Foreign Relations in New York in 1968 where secret CIA operations were discussed. Minutes of the meeting give no indication that Dillon objected when Richard M. Bissell, former head of the CIA's "dirty tricks" department, proposed greater use of private groups in the United States as cover for foreign operations.

● Retired Army Gen. Lyman L. Lemnitzer approved the CIA's Bay of Pigs invasion plan as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1961. He also recommended the use of U.S. Navy planes to salvage the CIA operation when it started to fall but was overruled by President John F. Kennedy.

● AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer Lane Kirkland served as executive assistant to president George Meany during the 1960s when the labor organization was accused of funnelling CIA

unds to foreign labor groups. Asked about the incident, Nessen replied that he did not know whether Kirkland knew of the CIA money-passing and, in any event, it involved a foreign operation, not the domestic activities under scrutiny by the new commission. AFL-CIO spokesman Al Zack insisted that the money was handled by individual unions, not the federation, and that, therefore, Kirkland had no involvement.

other members:

● Former Commerce Sec. John T. Connor played a leading part, as head of the pharmaceutical company of Merck, Sharpe and Dohme, in the successful effort by the CIA and the Kennedy administration to