

President mum on CIA report

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Ford discussed allegations of domestic spying by the Central Intelligence Agency with his secretaries of State and Defense Friday, but a White House

spokesman refused to say whether any action would be taken.

Press Secretary Ron Nessen told reporters the President "wants to pursue the subject further."

In addition to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger, Nessen said Ford would discuss the allegations of illegal domestic spying with CIA Director William E. Colby.

Nessen indicated Ford would have something to say about the allegations by the middle of next week.

Last week, Colby sent Ford a 50-page report which administration sources have said largely substantiates a report by the New York Times that CIA agents had been spying on activists and dissidents in the United States during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The alleged spying operation, said to have included files on 10,000 Americans, reportedly was discovered by Schlesinger during his brief tenure as head of the CIA in 1973. Schlesinger's predecessor, Richard Helms, has denied that any illegal domestic operations were conducted during his seven years as director of the intelligence agency.

Helms, now ambassador to Iran, was expected in Washington but Nessen said he didn't know of any plans for a meeting between Helms and Ford.

Kissinger, who also heads the National

Security Council, has disclaimed any knowledge of illegal activities by the CIA. Rep. Lucien Nedzi, D-Mich., chairman of a House subcommittee which oversees CIA activities, has said that the council "probably" would have been aware of any domestic operations.

Ford top officials in the counterintelligence unit described as controlling the alleged domestic spying have left the agency. The CIA has declined to discuss the departures, saying only that the four were taking advantage of retirement benefits available to employees who left government service before the end of the year.

However, sources have linked at least three of the departures to the spying allegations as well as to a long-standing policy dispute between Colby and the counterintelligence staff. According to these sources, members of the counterintelligence staff "totally" disagreed with Colby's views on detente with the Soviet Union and felt his policy of increased public exposure of CIA activities was ruining the agency.

Colby on CIA Report

4/75

Associated Press

President Ford met with Central Intelligence Agency Director William C. Colby yesterday to review published allegations that the agency conducted illegal spy operations in the United States.

Earlier, Mr. Ford discussed the alleged domestic surveillance with Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger, but a White House spokesman refused to say if any action would be taken.

President "wants to know the subject further," a spokesman Ron Nease said, adding that he would have something to say later.

The report, which was first published by the New York Times, says the CIA conducted an anti-war espionage program during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The alleged spying operation, said to have included files on 10,000 Americans, reportedly was discovered by Schlesinger during his brief tenure as head of the CIA in 1973. Schlesinger's predecessor, Richard Helms, has denied that any illegal domestic operation took place during his seven years as director. Helms, now ambassador to Mexico, was reliably reported to have returned to Washington, and Kissinger said he planned to confer with him today. Nease said he knew of no plans for a meeting between Helms and Mr. Ford.

Kissinger, who also heads the National Security Council, has disclaimed any knowledge of illegal activities by the CIA. Rep. Lucien N. Nedzi (D-Mich.), chairman of a House subcommittee which oversees CIA activities, has said that the council "probably" would have been aware of any domestic operations.

Four top officials in the counterintelligence unit described as controlling the alleged domestic spying have left the agency. The CIA has declined to discuss the departures, saying only that the four were taking advantage of retirement benefits available to employees who left government service before the end of the year.