

Ford to Appoint Citizens Panel To Probe CIA

By George C. Wilson
and Laurence Stern

Washington Post Staff Writers

President Ford announced yesterday that he will use the time-honored device of a "blue-ribbon" commission to investigate the controversy over domestic spying by the Central Intelligence Agency.

The objective of the commission will be to determine whether the CIA "exceeded its statutory authority" in surveillance operations conducted within the United States.

President Ford decided that the panel was necessary, explained White House press secretary Ron Nessen, because "enough questions" pertaining to CIA activities within this country were raised in a report, as yet undisclosed, by the agency's director, William E. Colby.

The full membership of the presidential panel will be announced soon, according to the White House. It will be balanced with private and governmental figures.

Kissinger, however, said in response to a question that "I see no reason" to replace Helms as ambassador to Iran because of the domestic surveillance allegations.

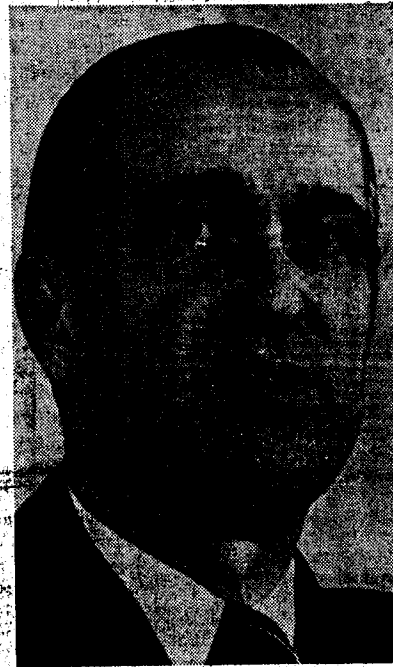
The President announced that the Justice Department is looking "into such aspects of the matter as are within jurisdiction."

Helms, in sworn statements to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has denied that the CIA was involved in domestic surveillance and counterintelligence activities during the Nixon administration. It was during the early years of the Nixon presidency that the monitoring of American citizens by the CIA is alleged to have reached its peak.

In June, 1970, Helms took part in interdepartmental meetings of intelligence agencies at the White House, according to the published memoranda of former Nixon Administration adviser Tom Charles Huston. Helms had told the Foreign Relations Committee in February, 1973 that he knew of no such meetings.

Yesterday's announcement came after a day of high-level review by the President and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger of the controversy over CIA domestic surveillance which surfaced in the press two weeks ago.

Former CIA Director Richard M. Helms, who has returned from his post as ambassador to Iran for a round of White House and congressional reviews, also participated in the discussions. Helms had break-



RICHARD M. HELMS

central figure

fast with Kissinger and also spoke to the President for 25 minutes, Nessen noted, at his own request.

Helms will figure centrally in the various inquiries into questionable domestic activities by the CIA. Many of the allegations of improper surveillance—such as burglaries, electronic surveillance and postal snooping—stem from the 1965-1973 period when Helms was head of the agency.

A similar commission was created in 1967 in the aftermath of disclosures that the CIA had infiltrated U.S. labor, student, cultural and philanthropic groups and institutions to support covert operations abroad. The earlier commission was headed by former Attorney General Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, who last year called for an end to CIA "covert political action programs."

It was not immediately clear whether the Colby report on domestic surveillance

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activities will be made public. There were indications from some unnamed government officials that the President felt the document was insufficient to clear the air of the present controversy.

"My feeling is that the President considered the tone of it too self-justifying," said one official. The Colby report was described as containing a short textual segment and a long series of appendices listing various types of domestic surveillance activities.

"It was not fit for human consumption," said another source. Administration sources said President

Ford was sensitive to the fact that Helms and his agency were under heavy pressure during the Vietnam turmoil to determine whether antiwar demonstrations were provoked by foreign powers or financed by them.

However, even allowing for this pressure, Mr. Ford's deputies said he felt Helms had made at least a liberal interpretation of his duties as CIA director.

The President is looking to the citizens committee, sources said, to take a fresh reading on how Helms' actions compared to his statutory authority. The panel will include at least one former governor and one former Cabinet officer with both domestic and foreign service.

'This Capability Is Fundamental'

Following is President Ford's statement on the establishment of a commission to investigate charges against the CIA.

I have today established a commission to ascertain and evaluate any facts relating to activities conducted within the United States by the Central Intelligence Agency that give rise to questions as to whether the agency has exceeded its statutory authority. I will soon be naming a distinguished group of members to serve on this "blue ribbon" panel.

In the world in which we live, the continuing threats to our national security, it is imperative we maintain an effective intelligence and counterintelligence capability. This capability is fundamental in providing the safeguards that protect our national interests and help avert armed conflict. The Central Intelligence Agency has had a notable

record in this field, but the nature of its operations, such as successes and achievements cannot be divulged publicly.

It is essential in this respect that we meet our security requirements and at the same time avoid impairing our democratic institutions and fundamental freedoms. Intelligence activities must be conducted consistently with both objectives.

To that end, in addition to asking the panel to determine whether the CIA has exceeded its statutory authority, I have asked the panel to determine whether existing safeguards are adequate to protect agency activities that might go beyond its authority and to make appropriate recommendations. The commission will immediately have the benefit of the report already furnished to me by Director W. E. Colby of the CIA. The Justice Department is, of course, also looking into aspects of the matter which are within its jurisdiction.

I am aware of current plans of various committees of the Congress to hold hearings on matters similar

to those which will be addressed by the commission. Whether hearings are undertaken by existing oversight committees, or should the Congress deem a joint House-Senate committee to be the best approach to avoid a proliferation of hearings, it is my strong hope that the committees consider the findings and recommendations of the commission.

I am confident that through the cooperative efforts of the executive branch, particularly by the new commission, and of the Congress, the results will be beneficial both to our national security and to the traditions and institutions of the Republic.

Moreover, I am writing to those departments and agencies which are responsible for the overall intelligence activities of the United States as related to our national security and to the conduct of our foreign policy for the purpose of emphasizing that they are at all times to conduct their activities within the scope of their respective statutory authorities.

The Weather

Today—Mostly sunny, high near 50, low tonight near 30. The chance of precipitation is near zero through tonight. Monday—Fair, high in the upper 40s. Yesterday's temperature range, 48-41. Details are on Page K2.

The Washington

98th Year

No. 31

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SUNDAY, JANUARY

To Quiet Criticism, CIA Must

By William Greider and Thomas O'Toole
Washington Post Staff Writers

Inside the supersecret agency of government, it is known as the Bluebird and, in some ways, the CIA is as obvious as that little blue bus which puttts around Washington, dropping its bureaucrats at their unmarked office buildings.

One ex-official, who rode the bus and played the CIA's secret games, remarked dryly: "There is much less difference between the agency and the Department of Agriculture than people would have you believe."

On its way downtown, the Bluebird winds through the high-rise offices of Rosslyn, past the CIA's Foreign Broadcast Information Service which cranks out translated digests of overseas radio news. The same building houses the old Domestic Contact Service, which picks up tidbits from thousands of Americans who travel abroad. Only now it's called the "Foreign Resources" branch, because "domestic" has become a scare word within the CIA.

Around the corner on Lynn Street, the Bluebird stops at the unmarked home of the Office of Basic and Geo-

graphic Intelligence, the shop which turns our encyclopedic "national intelligence surveys," everything you ever wanted to know about the other guy. Another building houses the recruiting office for ordinary out-front employees. Farther out Wilson Boulevard is "Blue U," a big blue office building owned by former congressman Joel Broyhill, where CIA technicians are trained.

In the city itself, the bus swings up 23d Street and lets off passengers at the training building tucked behind the Navy Medical Center, where they used to give new recruits the series of

ton Post

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5, 1975

Phone (202) 223-6000

Circulation 223-6100
Classified 223-6200

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Now Come in From the Cold

lie-detector tests to measure their mettle.

CIA posts are scattered all over the capital, though not on the Bluebird route—the so-called safe houses used for clandestine contacts and secure storage of enemy defectors, the field office on Pennsylvania Avenue a few blocks from the White House, the blank-faced yellow factory on M Street Southeast where agency analysts scrutinize high-altitude photos of Russia and China and the Middle East, counting up the rockets.

When the Bluebird rolls home to Langley, Va., and the seven-story mar-

ble fortress, shrouded by suburban forest, it is at the headquarters of the mystery. When the building was opened in 1961, agency officials put a sign out front, "Central Intelligence Agency," like any other government bureaucracy. One of the Kennedys told them to take it down—inappropriate for a bunch of spies.

The road signs are back in place now, but the mystique lingers on. Nathan Hale, a bronzed Yalie who was America's first martyred spy, stands brooding in the courtyard, his statute erected by another Ivy League spy, the

present director, William E. Colby, Princeton class of '41.

"Moses sent a man from each tribe to spy out the land of Canaan," Director Colby solemnly explains the tradition to interviewing reporters. "Nations have the right for their self-protection and self-interest to do things abroad in a different fashion from the way they want to run their country at home. Intelligence has been collected in that way for thousands of years."

It is the same speech the director makes to new recruits, the Career

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To Quiet Criticism, CIA Must

CIA, From A1

Trainees, who also get instruction in breaking and entering, telephone tapping, steaming open other people's mail, disrupting public meetings, fouling up automobiles and sabotaging printing presses.

Inside the gray and vacant lobby at headquarters, the CIA added a poignant touch several months ago—31 stars engraved on the marble wall for the anonymous-agency officers killed in action over the past generation.

Their stories are still secret, where they died and how, even their names are officially unacknowledged.

Outside the agency, a social mystique surrounds it, too. From the start, it has been run by men of breeding, Ivy League alumni who live in the smart homes of Georgetown and McLean, men who mix the coolness of their class status with the bravery of buccaneers. A former FBI agent once explained: "We had the Fordham boys, they had the Yalies."

On the lobby wall, opposite the 31 stars, the agency has posted its creed of intelligence, taken from a non spy, St. John: "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

Can the CIA be truthful about itself and still survive as a secret intelligence agency? That is its dilemma right now, as Congress and the public clamor for a fuller accounting of what this agency has done in the world and within the borders of the United States.

For 27 years, the CIA has prospered in secrecy, shrouded by tales of deriding-do, protected by official evasions. Now it must come in from the cold, at least enough to quiet the criticism. The "truth," as it unfolds in congressional inquiries and other investigations, might de-mythologize the place for its own good. Or, if the staunchest critics prevail, it might leave the CIA a mere shadow of its former shadow.

Some men who served within, who are still loyal to the agency, believe this process may be good therapy for the CIA and for the republic. For instance, listen to the "magic wand," theory held by one man who served in key CIA posts in Europe and Asia:

"The problem faced by the agency ever since it was formed is the idea that covert activity strikes many Americans in high places as the answer to everything—like a magic wand—as the solution to problems which aren't solved by the methods we are used to using.

"Thus, if you have a country that doesn't like our economic system, that doesn't want our aid, that doesn't talk to our leaders, that thinks it can get more from the Soviet Union, then you

Now Come in From the Cold

turn to the CIA. Ahah, the magic wand. I think that attitude has accounted for much of what has happened. The problem is the magic wand doesn't always work."

Others from the intelligence community are fearful that this period of probing may compromise the future effectiveness of the CIA, an arm of government which they consider vital, especially to an open democracy in a world of closed adversaries.

"The country has a lot to learn about how it wants to live with the CIA," said one ex-official. "And the CIA has a lot to learn about how it ought to serve the country."

The idea that something "magic" lurked behind the marble fortress has sustained Washington cocktail gossip for a generation, fed by incredible stories filled with danger and wit and often success.

There was the caper in Monte Carlo, remember, when the CIA rigged up a urinal in the casino to collect a sample from King Farouk because somebody in Washington was interested in his health.

And then there was the Bhuddist demonstration in Saigon when the political action branch sent South Vietnamese into the crowd with egg-size bombs of itching powder.

Or the time in Moscow when a CIA operation named "Gamma Guppy" intercepted the radio-telephone chitchat from the limousines of top Soviet officials; picking up masculine gossip about a masseuse named Olga, plus valuable insights into the Russian leaders' temperament.

Some of the stories ended unhappily. During the Korean War, the agency trained Taiwanese and parachuted them into mainland China where they broadcast out information on troop movements. A lot of them disappeared without a signal. Some made their way to the Manchurian foothills where they were scooped up in baskets by a low-flying C-47 with a hook. On one such flight in 1952, the Chinese were waiting. They shot down the plane, executed the spy, and two Americans, Jack Downey and Richard Fecteau, spent nearly two decades in a Chinese prison.

Back in 1963, when the CIA was helping to change governments in South Vietnam, things took their natural course and the agency's new clients murdered the agency's old client, Ngo

Dinh Diem.

In Laos, the CIA ran a secret war for 10 years, fought by its own "Armee Clandestine," with as many 35,000 recruits from the native populace. The agency congratulates itself for the cost-effectiveness of this operation and the small number of U.S. casualties—though the secret war virutally decimated a generation of Meo tribesmen.

The grasp the full range of CIA activity, however, consider this sample of countries where the agency has played an effective role in a change of government: Iran, Guatemala, Somalia, Brazil, Ecuador, Chile, South Vietnam, Laos, the Congo, Indonesia, according to the testimony of ex-officers, scholarly studies and the acknowledged history of the agency.

Does the CIA kidnap people? Does it torture? Does it assassinate? No, no, no, the Old Hands insist. "Our world is full of assassins," one retired officer maintains, "who never killed anybody." Another high CIA official, however, was less reassuring on assassinations.

"I don't want to make a flat statement that we never did such a thing," he explained. "There were some things that were a little close to the edge."

Years ago, such artful disclaimers from the agency were swallowed without much question. Now, because of a combination of factors, a new skepticism has developed. The CIA's

chummy connections with the Watergate burglars, its denials, followed by belated admissions, upset even the agency's defenders on Capitol Hill. Further, the fresh disclosure of CIA involvement in toppling a foreign government—this time in Chile—renewed old arguments over its "covert action" abroad.

Then, more recently, a report by The New York Times that some of the agency's overseas espionage techniques were being used at home against American citizens produced additional shock waves.

Now, dozens of resolutions are pending in Congress for a grand inquiry of some sort or even a new oversight committee to exercise greater control. Some critics want to outlaw the agency's "dirty tricks" altogether and restrict it solely to intelligence-gathering, a task which is done more and more by electronic marvels in the sky rather than human spies.

One of the doubters is Rep. Lucien Nedzi, chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Intelligence, which expects to draft legislation redefining the CIA's charter and perhaps narrowing the range of "covert operations."

"A larger number of purists will say and perhaps rightly so that we got no business getting involved in such activities," Nedzi explained, "But my view of a Congress as a whole is that there is a lingering feeling that the world isn't so neat and tidy that we can afford to tie our hands in this way."

Nedzi describes himself leaning toward the "purist" camp. "I'm inclined to think we ought to stay out of covert operations," he said. "I want to emphasize I'm not persuaded 100 per cent. At this point, I have such serious doubts size I'm not persuaded 100 per cent. At this point, I have such serious doubts that you can maintain secrecy, so, if you going to be involved somewhere, do it openly and support it publicly."

The congressional debate gets a bit confused, however, because only a handful on Capitol Hill really know what they are talking about (and most of them won't talk at all). In 1949, Congress "freed" the agency from regular appropriations processes. Its activities and spending are reviewed in private by a few members from House and Senate committees on Armed Services, Appropriations and, more recently, Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs. The rest of Congress is kept in the dark. So are most people inside the CIA.

According to one reliable source, the CIA is now an agency with about 15,000 regular employees, a figure shrunk by inflation and budget holddowns, just like other federal agencies. About 4,800 of those people work in "clandestine services," the secret spies here and abroad, but the agency hires thousands of foreign "agents" to

gather information too.

The CIA spends about \$750 million a year (not counting the very expensive satellites and spy planes operated for it by the Pentagon), which makes it more costly than the National Science Foundation, but less expensive than the State Department.

The CIA won't verify that budget figure, but when former agency official Victor Marchetti published it in his book, "The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence," the agency tried unsuccessfully to censor it.

Langley operates or supports a bizarre collection of enterprises. It has bankrolled two radio stations—Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty—plus several news services to distribute propaganda. It owned several airlines—Air America, Air Asia and Southern Air Transport. It whipped together its own air force of B-26s for war in the Congo. It has some 200 agents under "cover" overseas as executives of American businesses. It has, by the last estimate, several dozen journalists on its payroll abroad. Its West Point is "The Farm," codename ISOLATION, at Camp Peary, Va., but it has also trained foreign mercenaries in Saipan and Okinawa and at the International Policy Academy in Washington.

In the 1960s, the agency penetrated scores of domestic institutions, mainly with its money, by financing overseas activities by labor unions (Retail Clerks, Communication Workers, Newspaper Guild, to name a few), and private organizations like the National Student Association and the National Education Association and dozens of tax-exempt foundations. It now avows that those days are over—though for some like international labor organizations, the government has replaced secret CIA funding with "overt" money.

The CIA was born with the National Security Act of 1947, the same year as the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. Quartered at first in old Tempo buildings along the Tidal Basin, it

flourished with the Cold War, picking up the FBI's responsibility for overseas surveillance but forswearing any involvement in domestic spying, a restriction on which the late J. Edgar Hoover reportedly insisted.

Six months ago, the Senate debated over whether to make the CIA present its budget figures in public, but decided against it. The agency's view is that if you divulge the budget one year you will have to do it again the following year—thus signaling too much information to the opposition.

"If you have a very important technical system which can be countered fairly easily," said Director Colby, "in Washington today, you're going to let as few people know about it as possible. Why? Because somebody will make a mention of it, just to show how important he is, sometimes. Or the reporter will pick it up and he'll run it and somebody will turn a switch and we will no longer get the benefit of it.

That has happened. So you hold it as narrowly as you can."

But the penchant for secrecy even leaves people within the agency uncertain whether they are getting the full story. The CIA is organized so the left-hand won't tell the right-hand what it's doing, not to mention ordinary congressmen. When the "covert operations" people were organizing the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, they did not tell the agency's own deputy director of intelligence, Robert Amory, who might have figured out that the whole trip would be a bummer.

When the "covert" people wanted to check out a Chinese espionage prospect with the agency's established contact man in Hong Kong, they didn't send one name. They sent half a dozen — so that no one, in between would know with whom they were doing business.

Even communications between CIA people is garbled in a heavy language of cryptonyms. Nobody ever uses the right name for anything or anybody. The U.S.A. is ODYOKE, according to ex-spy Philip Agee's account. ODCAD is the State Department. ODEARL is Defense. KUBARK is CIA. They have a RED series to cover anti-Soviet operations—REDWOOD, REDSOX and REDSKIN (which means legal travelers into Russia).

The CIA is especially proud of its claim that its ranks have never been penetrated from the outside, an accomplishment of the agency's counterintelligence section, the one now under fire for its alleged domestic activities. "They are the real paranoids of the agency," said one former officer. "They don't trust anybody."

If the CIA does not tell the straight story inside, how can anyone outside be sure they are getting the truth? That question was given more substance late last year with the release of testimony by the late CIA Director Allen Dulles before the Warren Commission in 1964. Dulles assured the investigators that, as CIA chief, he might well lie to them or anyone else, except the President himself, to protect the identity of a CIA agent.

When former CIA Director James Schlesinger was trying to figure out the CIA's connection with Watergate, he assured the congressional oversight committees that the agency was not in contact with the burglary team's wireman, James McCord. Months later, McCord's periodic letters to the agency turned up.

"He said, 'I'm so damn mad. I just learned about this,'" recalled Rep. Nedzi. "After going into the matter, it became clear that someone way down the line had these letters tucked away."

The CIA is also effective in keeping secrets from its diplomatic counterpart—the State Department. Yet, the CIA uses diplomatic cover for most of its overseas officers. They show up on the regular embassy rosters, usually with

bland titles which conceal their real influence. "Informers want to talk to diplomats," one agency veteran explained. "They don't want to talk to Coca-Cola salesmen."

The Russians, of course, use the same system. In a way, it protects both sides, because, as one CIA alumnus explained, governments don't arrest diplomats. The worst that will happen to any operative from KGB, the Soviet spy apparatus, or the CIA is exposure and expulsion.

In terms of quantity, the business of "running agents" in foreign countries is a minor part of the CIA's game, producing a small fraction of the total intelligence. In terms of quality, there are strong differences among CIA men themselves over whether it is worth much.

For the old hands, who grew up with the agency, it is the heart of the business. "It's the only part of the job that counts," one of them said nostalgically.

For others, especially among the younger officers, it is an elaborate game of "Mickey Mouse" that pumps out lots of reports, mostly worthless to American policy decisions.

"Meeting people in bars at midnight—that gets old fast," said one young ex-officer. "The first time it's fun, but it gets old. When you get done, you have to go back through the bureaucracy. Write a report, file an expense chit."

The traditionalists argue that spy satellites are good for counting missile silos, but they do not help with reading minds. "The people tell you about political dynamics," a high official explained. "It's terribly important to know what's going on within a closed society, comparative political forces, strengths of the military group, party apparatus, the government, the youth movement. You're not going to get that out of a machine."

The skeptics don't think the CIA is so hot at getting those kind of insights either, especially from China and the Soviet Union.

"The bulk of the overseas jobs are anachronistic game-playing," said one of the disillusioned. "Running agents—that's a crock. It's minutia. It's recruiting low-level and middle-level politicians and paying them for reports. A lot of times, the report turns out to be something the agent copied out of a newspaper."

It also can be expensive. One retired officer said a busy station like West Germany could spend as much as \$3 million a year, taking care of defectors and supporting local politicians, even ones who are temporarily out of office. "So he won't go broke," the officer explained.

One CIA official, who prizes the system of agent information, explained why it can be costly:

"Sometimes to run a good case in-

volves quite a few people on our side. Because if you're going to meet the fellow, you have to have somebody watching you to see who else may be watching you and then watching him because somebody else may be watching him, so somebody has to be watching him to see who may be watching him when we make the meeting."

If that sounds like dialogue from TV's Maxwell Smart, the business of CIA penetration is no joke to foreign governments. "Inside the Company," an ex-officer's book scheduled for publication in England this month, provides an exhaustive portrait of how it is done: the tedium and scope and risk of American spies trying to pry their way into another country's politics. Philip Agee, a CIA man for 12 years, has set down the most minute details of his service in Ecuador, Argentina and Mexico, naming names and causing a considerable reshuffle of CIA personnel in Latin America.

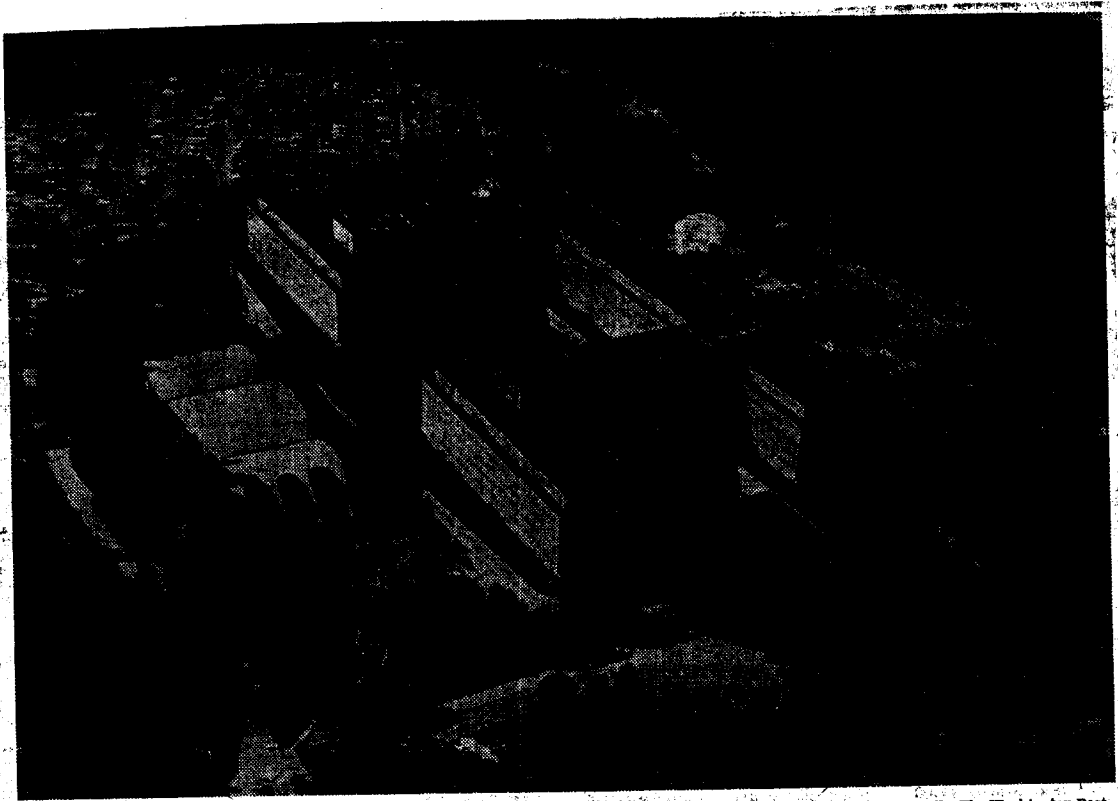
A lot of energy was expended in trying to tap into Communist bloc embassies or to compromise their employees. In Mexico City, he recounts, the agent LICOWL-1 ran a tiny grocery across from the Soviet embassy and reported that Silnikov, the embassy's administration officer, was ripe for enticement.

"The station decided to recruit a young Mexican girl as bait," Agee reported. "An appropriate girl was obtained through BESABAR, an agent who is normally targeted against Polish intelligence officers. By loitering at LICOWL-1's store, the girl attracted Silnikov's attention and a hot necking session in a back room at the store led to several serious afternoon sessions at the girl's apartment nearby, obtained especially for this operation. Silnikov's virility is astonishing both the girl and the station, which is recording and photographing the sessions with the knowledge of the girl. Eventually it will be decided whether to try blackmail against Silnikov or to provoke disruption by sending tapes and photos to the embassy if the blackmail is refused."

In Ecuador, the CIA was plugged into the police, politicians, the post office, the airports, the government, labor and student groups.

Here, for example, is Agee's recital of the agents recruited there in the early 1960s:

ECSIGIL, two independent operatives within the Ecuadorean Communist Party, each with his own "cut out," another agent who served as go-between so they would not have to meet directly with CIA people. ECFONE, another Communist Party agent, sending five or six reports a Revolutionary Union of Ecuadorean week. ECGLIVE, an agent inside the Youth. ECCENTRIC, a doctor friendly chief of intelligence in the National Police. ECJACK, an army intelligence own country's ineffective service and



By Ken Felt—The Washington Post

CIA's seven-story marble fortress in Langley, Va. Road signs have been replaced, but the mystique lingers on.

with the president. ECAMOROUS, an officer who wanted to resign from his job to join the CIA full-time.

ECSTASY, a postal worker in Quito who set aside mail pouches from Cuba, Russia and China for his brother, who delivered them to the U.S. embassy for inspection. ECOTTER, an airport employee who passed on passenger lists. ECTOSOME, an Oldsmobile dealer who reported on his Czech friends. ECOXBOW, a retired colonel and vice president of the Senate, getting \$790 a month plus a luxury hotel room for fun and games because his access was so good.

AMBLOOD, an agent trained to penetrate Cuba where he was later caught and confessed to an assassination plot aimed at Fidel Castro.

The list goes on and on—a newspaper columnist, political candidates, a cabinet member, student leaders, even a socialist in the Chamber of Deputies.

But, as Agee laboriously recounts how the CIA used these people, it becomes clear that passive intelligence-gathering was only a small part of the game. There was constant agitation against the government's recognition of Cuba, against the leadership of domestic organizations, against any Ecuadorean forces which the CIA station chief perceived as hostile to American interests. In agency terms, the action succeeded. Two governments fell in quick succession, thanks partly to the clandestine agitation, and were succeeded finally by a military regime.

The controversy over foreign activities has been matched in the last two years by unanswered questions about what the CIA is doing inside the United States. The agency's law limits it to gathering foreign intelligence abroad, but a loophole provision also directs it to protect national security sources—interpreted to include some domestic operations.

The CIA has offices in at least 15 American cities, according to one former employee, where as many as 500 people interview scientists, businessmen and college professors either bound for Eastern Europe or just returning. The agency asks them to look out for mundane intelligence like the crop reports or esoteric technical gossip like the status of new technology.

Among ex-officers, it is widely believed that the agency's counter intelligence has on occasion "bugged" its own employees to check their security. The spectre of widespread electronic

eavesdropping in the drawing rooms of Georgetown is not so widely believed.

The agency's pursuit of "foreign" intelligence has also led to some state-side burglaries, according to one former officer, who said the CIA had broken into embassies in New York and Washington, mainly to photograph foreign codebooks.

Director Colby insists that the agency does not have any "gray areas" in its charter which allow it to break U.S. laws. But then he muses aloud over the question of a burglary of the Japanese embassy, say, two days before Pearl Harbor. Would the CIA be justified in doing it?

"That's a close case," the director said, "a very close case."

One limitation to CIA activity within the United States has been its natural bureaucratic rivalry with the FBI. When Hoover was alive, he persistently protected his own turf and blew his stack in 1970 over a minor episode when an FBI man passed to the CIA the whereabouts of a college president on his way to Eastern Europe. Hoover demanded the name of his own agent and the CIA refused. The FBI director retaliated by cutting off "all liaison" with Langley.

"There were a lot of people in government," said an ex-CIA official, "who were asking God at the time to take Mr. Hoover from us."

The Watergate scandal suggested that, contrary to tradition, the CIA could be persuaded to help out with domestic spying aimed at American citizens. It began with a telephone call from White House aide John D. Ehrlichman to CIA Deputy Director Robert Cushman, suggesting the agency give "carte blanche" to E. Howard Hunt Jr., the former agency officer working for the White House "plumbers." When Hunt called on him, Cushman taped the conversation and turned over, exotic paraphernalia—a wig, a moustache, a fake identification card, a speech altering device, a camera concealed in a tobacco pouch.

Hunt and his friends did a couple of burglaries for the White House before they were caught. Meanwhile, the CIA helped out again with a psychological profile on Daniel Ellsberg, the antiwar critic who surfaced the Pentagon Papers.

When the scandal broke, the agency successfully deflected White House suggestions that the CIA was somehow

responsible. Still, the episode left troubling questions. It was learned, for instance, that McCord was reporting to a CIA "case officer," a relationship which implies that McCord was doing domestic work for the agency.

How much does anyone in Congress know about this sort of thing? Are senators briefed on embassy break-ins? Did Congress know that the U. S. government according to one estimate was spending at least \$11 million in the early 1980s to change governments in Ecuador? According to the CIA, it faithfully reports all of its "covert activities" to the select few entitled to know, but even the agency admits that it does not volunteer any extra details — if nobody asks the right questions.

Director Colby explains: "If you look back over 25 years, you see degrees and variations of Congress's supervision, so that I think that some of the senators can properly say they didn't hear of some things. In some cases, their chairman heard about them. In others, the material was perhaps covered in our annual appropriations briefings in which the matter was covered in general terms and then described to the degree requested."

When Congress turns to its debate on CIA oversight, it will have to see one nettlesome reality: in a lot of situations, Congress did not want to know. If a spooky operation succeeded, fine. If it failed, then everyone could holler.

Sen. John Stennis (D-Miss.) who chairs the Senate's joint oversight committee, once expressed his own ambivalence: "You have to make up your mind that you are going to have an intelligence agency and protect it as such and shut your eyes some and take what is coming."

The Stennis committee rarely meets though the senator has pledged more vigorous supervision in the wake of Watergate. The new foreign aid bill requires advance briefings for Foreign Relations members too. Marchetti tells in his book about the time in 1968 when the Senate appropriations subcommittee was prepared to ask tough questions about technological costs. The agency bedazzled them with a display of James Bond gadgets — a camera in a tobacco pouch, a transmitter concealed in false teeth and so forth — some of the same equipment which the CIA later provided to the White House burglary team.

On the House side, Rep. Nedzi said he has been briefed regularly about

CIA activities ever since he became chairman of the oversight subcommittee two years ago, and that nothing on the scale of the Chile intervention has occurred in that time. How does he know for sure?

"The answer is that I don't," Nedzi said. "I'm not going to vouch for what they're telling me. But I want to emphasize that I have no reason to believe that they're lying to me, at least at the top levels."

On the other hand, Nedzi has known for more than a year about the CIA domestic spying which caused the current flap. He was briefed on it by Colby and kept it to himself. Nedzi was assured, he said, that the questionable had been discontinued. "It was historical," he said.

If congressional oversight has been weak, some experts think the same is true of the executive branch. One former official said the National Security Council, despite the popular mythology about it, exercises very little control over the spooky operations. If any one does, it is the President. The NSC issues lots of directives about the CIA's noncontroversial bureaucratic functions, he said, but the sticky clandestine stuff never gets written down.

The Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, consisting of nine prominent citizens, many closely attached to the defense establishment, is likewise not regarded as a serious check. One highly regarded CIA alumnus said: "Those guys are almost without exception more hawkish than the guys in the agency. The tone of those guys is: 'If there's anything wrong, blow 'em up.'"

If Congress does opt for new oversight machinery, it will still face the dilemma of how to operate a secret agency in an open democracy. "All of the clamor," said Nedzi, "is based on the premise that somehow, if Congress had known about all these things, they wouldn't have happened. To me, that doesn't follow at all."

"There's a very difficult problem here that fortunately I haven't come to in its pure form yet. What is the moral obligation of a congressional overseer if some information comes to him which indicates a direction in which he doesn't feel the agency or the country should be going? Does he have the right to blow the cover of the project? Does he have a duty to blow the cover? If your answer is yes, is it reasonable to have a secret agency in the hands of so many masters?"