

Nixon '68 Campaign Aide Secretly Probed by CIA

N.Y. Times News Service

A Central Intelligence Agency operative, posing as a private detective, investigated the personal life of a top aide to former President Richard M. Nixon during the 1968 campaign for the Republican presidential nomination, according to well-placed federal officials.

The operative, Franklin R. Geraty, reportedly conducted the investigation under the auspices of a nonexistent New York City detective firm that the officials said had been set up as a "front" for CIA domestic operations.

The alleged target of the undercover probe was Richard V. Allen, a foreign affairs expert who shortly before had resigned from Stanford University's Hoover Institution to join Nixon as a national security adviser.

A high official of the CIA confirmed that his agency had ordered a clandestine investigation of Allen, but he said it was entirely unrelated to Allen's work in behalf of Nixon.

On June 25, 1968, barely two weeks after Allen said he joined the Nixon campaign staff, Geraty appeared at the office of a banker in Palo Alto, Calif., the city where Allen had been living, and displayed a credential indentifying himself as a representative of the Fidelity Reporting Service of New York City.

THE BANKER, who asked that his name not be used, recalled in an interview that Geraty said he was seeking whatever personal information he might have on Allen. When asked the reason for the inquiry, the banker said, Geraty replied that he had been retained by "the Republicans" to conduct background checks on some Nixon aides.

The banker, who was no unknown in high Republican circles, said that he became suspicious and sent Geraty away with a request to call back later. Then, he said, he telephoned Rose

Mary Woods, Nixon's personal secretary, to verify the mysterious investigator's purpose.

According to the banker, Miss Woods checked and informed him that no such investigation of Allen or anyone else had been commissioned by the Nixon campaign.

Sources familiar with the 1968 campaign said the matter had been referred to John J. Caulfield, a former New York City policeman who was then chief of staff security for Nixon.

Caulfield, who later gained prominence in the Watergate scandal through his role as a White House investigator, reportedly made inquiries about the Fidelity Reporting Service and said that it appeared to be a "CIA outfit," the sources said.

THEY ADDED, however, that the assertion that the CIA had investigated a top Nixon aide was not made public in the course of the 1968 campaign for fear that an attack on the Johnson administration would move President Lyndon B. Johnson to more enthusiastic support of Hubert H. Humphrey, the Democratic nominee.

The investigation of Allen was first mentioned publicly by William Safire, a former Nixon speechwriter and now a columnist for the New York Times, in "Before the Fall," Safire's recently published history of the Nixon presidency.

An independent, month-long investigation by the Times established a number of details about the incident, including Geraty's true identity, all of which were subsequently confirmed by high officials of the CIA.

One CIA official conceded that it might appear, on the surface, as though "we were watching the other side" during the 1968 presidential campaign.

He pointed out, however, that six months before

Allen joined Nixon's staff, he had approached the CIA for assistance on a research project.

Allen, 39, was then a senior staff member of Stanford's Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace and editor of its yearbook on international Communist affairs.

In that capacity, the CIA official said, Allen met in January 1968 with Richard Helms, then the director of the CIA, and asked to see various unclassified agency reports on the strengths of national Communist parties.

HELMS AGREED, the official said, to make the materials available, and Allen continued to deal with the agency on an informal basis during the spring of 1968.

On March 27 of that year, the official said, the CIA decided independently that it wished to make available to Allen certain classified publications that bore on his work.

A background investigation was ordered, the official said, "and we farmed the job out to one of our investigators in the San Francisco area."

The CIA man produced a document relating to the investigation that carried the March 27 date and showed the name of the investigator as Franklin R. Geraty.

Geraty, is now said to be a Defense Department investigator, repeatedly declined to answer questions about the Allen investigation.

Following Nixon's victory in 1968, Allen joined the staff of Henry A. Kissinger, then Nixon's national security adviser.

Allen later became deputy assistant to Nixon for international economic affairs. He now operates a private economic consulting firm here.