

Rockefeller Panel Ends CIA Probe

By George Lardner Jr. 5/13/75
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Rockefeller commission completed its investigation of the Central Intelligence Agency's domestic activities yesterday except for the finishing touches required for a report to President Ford.

The commission's vice chairman, C. Douglas Dillon, told reporters that "we didn't dig up anything" surprising beyond the allegations and disclosures already made public in the press.

The inquiry ranged from a covert CIA program of intercepting first-class mail to reports of CIA involvement in assassination schemes against foreign leaders such as Cuban Premier Fidel Castro.

Headed by Vice President Rockefeller, the commission heard 48 witnesses at closed, once-a-week hearings that started Jan. 13. Its staff took

depositions from scores of others.

The eight-member panel will now embark on an accelerated round of private sessions to edit a draft report for Mr. Ford that already covers at least 600 pages. Spokesmen said staff lawyers and investigators are still doing some wrap-up work and several sections of the draft report remain incomplete.

Dillon, however, said he felt that "with one or two major exceptions, everything that was done was rather peripheral and was connected in one way or another to the legitimate work of the agency." He did not spell out what he would regard as the "major exceptions" to that conclusion.

The deadline for the report

See CIA, A12, Col. 2

Rockefeller Panel Ends CIA Probe

CIA, From A1

to Mr. Ford is June 6. It is being written with the expectation that it will be made public, but the President will make the final decision after he has reviewed it.

Commission spokesmen were unclear about how detailed the report would be in recounting various episodes, although one said "certainly the names of top officials will be used."

The transcripts of testimony taken by the commission and its staff will be kept secret, he added.

President Ford created the commission on Jan. 5 to investigate charges that the CIA spied on Americans in the United States in violation of its charter.

CIA Director William E. Colby subsequently acknowledged in congressional testimony that the agency engaged in surveillance of American journalists and political dissenters, opened first-class mail over a 20-year period between the United States and Communist countries, planted informers inside domestic protest groups, assembled files on more than 10,000 Americans, and kept counterintelligence files on at least four members of Congress.

Dillon said he would not characterize what the CIA did as "massive" domestic spying.

"The allegation is that the agency was devoting a large part of its time on domestic areas when it was supposed to be operating abroad," he said. "I don't think this was the case."

The commission was originally scheduled to report to the President in March, but it was granted an extension after Mr. Ford asked it to explore any violations of domestic law arising out of the CIA's alleged involvement in assassination plots against Castro and others.

Dillon said yesterday he has "no knowledge" that President Kennedy was killed in retaliation for CIA plotting against Castro, as one persistent rumor has it.

But he was more reserved about the commission's inquiry into assassination plots against foreign leaders. With-

out characterizing the findings, he said the investigation of these allegations involved "largely Castro" although others concerned the late Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic.

The commission also checked into claims by activist Dick Gregory and associates that a photograph of several shabbily dressed men picked up in Dallas shortly after the November, 1963, assassination of President Kennedy showed two persons resembling Watergate burglars E. Howard Hunt and Frank Sturgis, both former CIA operatives.

The FBI, which looked into the same claims last year and found no substance to them, dispatched a photographic expert to Dallas recently to review its findings and apparently came up with the same results.

Hunt and Sturgis have denied being in Dallas the day the President was killed.

The final two witnesses before the commission yesterday were retired Navy Adm. George B. Anderson, chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, and chief U. S. Postal Inspector William J. Cotter, who told of his repeated and finally successful efforts to get the CIA to abandon its illegal mail-interception program.