

Kissinger denies link to CIA spying in U.S.

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WASHINGTON—Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger denied on Monday having any involvement in alleged Central Intelligence Agency domestic spying or foreign assassination plots.

"Since I have been in Washington, the National Security Council or the National Security Council staff or the assistant to the President for national security affairs did not concern themselves with domestic intelligence or were informed about domestic intelligence," Kissinger told reporters after a two-hour-closed-door session with the Rockefeller commission.

Asked about allegations of CIA assassination plots, Kissinger chuckled and said, "none of those allegations pertains to any period of which I have personal knowledge."

Kissinger has served as national security adviser to both former President Nixon and to President Ford.

Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger, who headed the agency briefly in 1973, also testified and later told reporters that "assassination has not been used as a tool by the CIA at any time."

However, Schlesinger said he would have "no comment on allegations regarding (the assassination of) foreign leaders." He added that "there are questions here that the commission and the appropriate congressional bodies may wish to review."

Asked whether the CIA had undertaken domestic surveillance in response to White House pressure, Schlesinger said, "My recollection . . . is that indeed there were expressions of interest on the part of senior officials of the government."

Asked if these expressions came from Kissinger, Schlesinger indicated that the requests "came through channels other than national security channels."

Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller later told reporters that "there were many channels from the White House to the CIA" but refused to supply details or state where requests for domestic surveillance had originated.

Walt W. Rostow, Kissinger's predecessor as national security adviser, also appeared before the commission but declined any comment on his testimony.

John A. McCone, CIA director during the early 1960s, also testified before the eight-member commission.

McCone later told reporters he had to "plead ignorance" in response to questions about alleged plots against the life of Cuban Premier Fidel Castro. "During my term of office, there was no, absolutely no assassination plot or authorized assassination plot against Castro or any other foreign leader," McCone said.