

Turner Denies U.S. Spying In S. Korea's Blue House

By Bill Richards

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The U.S. Intelligence apparatus in South Korea never bugged or taped conversations conducted by top Korean officials in the Blue House, the presidential mansion in Seoul, CIA Director Stansfield Turner said yesterday.

Turner, meeting with reporters, flatly rejected news reports of electronic spying on the Korean presidential residence. The reports have appeared in stories on an alleged scheme by South Korean officials to bribe U.S. congressmen.

"There were not tapes and no bugs," said Turner, "and I'm speaking for the CIA, the NSA [National Security Agency] or any other U.S. intelligence agency."

But the CIA director declined to answer questions on whether U.S. intelligence agencies had intercepted messages transmitted to or from Korea.

The unusual decision by the CIA to issue any sort of comment on an operational question was made jointly last month by the CIA and the State Department, Turner said.

Other intelligence sources have told The Washington Post that information about the alleged bribery scheme—including verbatim conversations that were said to have taken place inside the Blue House—have come from interception of microwave transmissions and other messages outside the presidential mansion, reports from various informants and from tapes of some conversations made by the Koreans themselves.

In his comments yesterday, Turner denied any tit-for-tat spying arrangement between the CIA or Iran's Savak.

He noted, however, that there has been concern for several years about interception of communications in this country by foreign governments,

corporations or even "gangsters." Because of this, Turner said, unspecified "protective measures" have been taken to shield sensitive communications from interception.

He also said files on the agency's MKULTRA mind-control experiments of the 1950s and 1960s will be given to the Justice Department if there is any indication of crime having been committed during the program. A Justice spokesman said no requests have been made for any of the files.