

CIA buildup began under Nixon

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WASHINGTON (AP) — The major buildup of the Central Intelligence Agency's domestic spy operation came during the early years of the Nixon administration, according to a report the agency submitted to President Ford in December.

The secret report released by the CIA for the first time Tuesday night also states that quick replacements were requested in the agency's "Operation CHAOS" program in the summer of 1972. It said the volume of material was causing a "physical drain on the health of the group's officers trying to keep up with the enormous continuing volume of work."

"Operation CHAOS" was the code name for a program to uncover any foreign influence behind domestic unrest but later turned to reporting on domestic activities of U.S. citizens, according to the Rockefeller Commission.

The report, consisting of a six-page letter from CIA Director William E. Colby to Ford plus 56 pages of documents, contains no major revelations of CIA activities beyond those documented by the Rockefeller

Commission. The Colby report as drafted in response to allegations published by The New York Times that the CIA had conducted a mostly illegal domestic spy operation. One White House official called the report a "historical fact of no particular new interest." He added: "There has been no reason not to release that report for some long period of time."

The report contains no mention of alleged CIA involvement in assassination plots against foreign leaders although reliable sources have said that the original report drafted at the insistence of Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger during his brief tenure in 1973 as head of CIA, contained information on assassinations.

The Senate Intelligence Committee continued its probe of the controversial assassination issue Wednesday by questioning high level officials from the Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Among witnesses were Walt Rostow, national security adviser to President Johnson, Maxwell D. Taylor, military adviser to President Kennedy and Gordon Gray, national security adviser to President Eisenhower.

According to a June 1, 1972, memorandum contained in the Colby report, the agency's "Operation CHAOS" began in 1967 with only one officer but in mid-1969 "a total of 36 positions was authorized with the understanding that, if this should prove insufficient, additional personnel would be authorized." Fifty-four intelligence officers ultimately were involved, according to the memo.

The Rockefeller report also documented the buildup of "Operation CHAOS" during the Nixon years, but the Colby report offers the first detailed account by the CIA of its own spy operation.