Messages Of Activists Intercepted

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The National Security Agency intercepted conversations of Jane Fonda, Dr. Benjamin Spock and other leading antiwar figures in 1969 and 1970, according to informed intelligence community sources.

The communications were intercepted by the NSA from overseas cable traffic, some domestic telegrams and long-distance telephone calls, the sources said. Transcripts were then circulated to top government officials under one of the nation’s most highly classified “and closely held code designations,” they said.

At least 150 messages of conversations and communications of antiwar leaders were routed to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other officials under a special intelligence designation in the “Gamma” series for sensitive communications intercepts, the sources said.

Special officers in the CIA, FBI and the counterintelligence unit of the Defense Intelligence Agency were designated to receive and handle these messages, according to the sources.

The sources revealed the exact code designation in the Gamma series used for the intercepts of the communications of antiwar figures, but an intelligence official suggested last week that it would be imprudent to make it public.

The National Security Agency used a similar designation in the Gamma series — the designation “Gamma Gupy” — for communications it monitored from the limousine radio calls of Soviet Union officials in Moscow. This project was first reported in newspapers in 1971.

The Gamma designations were reserved exclusively for intercepts of Russian communications until the NSA received orders in 1969 to use the same sensitive methods and procedures to monitor the communications of U.S. antiwar leaders, the sources said. It could not be learned who issued the orders.

In addition to Fonda and Spock, the NSA monitored communications of “Chicago Seven” defendants Abbie Hoffman and David T. Dellinger and former Black Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver, the sources said.

All these persons traveled extensively abroad and throughout this country during 1969 and 1970. Cleaver, for example, visited Cuba, Algeria, Sweden and North Vietnam during this period. Virtually all the intercepted messages were short and involved travel plans or appointments, the sources said.

Under another, less sensitive code designation, the NSA also obtained and circulated information on the personal life of the Rev. Ralph Abernathy, Dr. Martin Luther King’s successor as head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the
NSA Interceptions of Cables
By Antiwar Figures Reported

NSA, From A1 sources said. It could not be determined how the NSA, currently has the capability to intercept virtually all domestic communications in the United States. In carrying out its legally mandated responsibilities, the NSA intercepts all kinds of irrelevant communications, some involving U.S. citizens, the sources said.

"What Brezhnev and Jane Fonda said got about the same treatment," one source said.

The National Security Agency is in charge of protecting communications security and U.S. message codes while attempting to intercept and break the messages and codes of foreign powers. NSA Director Lt. Gen. Lew Allen Jr. said through a spokesman that he would have no comment on this story.

A Pentagon spokesman also declined to comment, and retired Army Gen. Earle Wheeler, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the time, could not be reached for comment. Sources said Wheeler reviewed most of the messages from antiwar leaders and initial them with a "W."

One source within the intelligence community said the communications intercepts were confined to international cables. Two other sources, however, said the NSA intercepted a limited number of domestic communications as well.

There is no indication that the methods, for intercepting the communications involved conventional wiretapping. Instead, the sources said, the information came from various airwave interceptions such as from microwave stations that are used to transmit or relay telephone calls and telegrams.

The sources said the NSA

The next most sensitive designation was given the code word "Delta" and it, too, comprised its own series. Some examples were "Delta Dice," "Delta Dace" and "Delta Dant." All concerned information on Russian military operations such as the location of Soviet submarines or Russian aircraft operations.

All these special intelligence messages were handled by special officers at the Pentagon, the DIA, the CIA and the FBI called the "Delta-Gamma Officer."

Messages dealing with the intercepted conversations of antiwar leaders were labeled "Top Secret (Trine)") followed by the particular "Gamma" designator. The word "Trine" used on such messages designated the material as "special intelligence" involving sensitive sources of information. Of three categories of special intelligence, "Trine" was the highest and most sensitive.

The messages of antiwar leaders were numbered in sequence and stored separately from other intelligence material, the sources said.

The NSAs interception capabilities are said to be more extensive than previously known.