

Messages Of Activists Intercepted

10/13/75

By Bob Woodward
Washington Post Staff Writer

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 the 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

See NSA, A14, Col. 1

NSA Interceptions of Cables By Antiwar Figures Reported

NSA, From A1

sources said. It could not be determined how the NSA came by this information.

Those familiar with the monitoring programs said the conversations involving top Soviet leaders would come in one moment and those of the antiwar personalities the next.

"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 initialed 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 method 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

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.

"This material figuratively goes in the wastebasket," one intelligence official said. "It may go into a computer or be recorded but it is never printed out . . . it never gets into anyone's hands and is passed around, though the capability is still there."

There was no indication last week that any of the congressional committees currently investigating the intelligence community was aware of the interception of the communications of antiwar leaders.

"Gamma Gupy" and other "Gamma" series designations indicated the method or source of the intelligence information being transmitted. The NSA considered the methods and the sources more sensitive than the messages intercepted, according to persons familiar with NSA operations.

The agency assigned about 20 different code designations to the "Gamma" series. Each began with "Gamma" and was followed by a four-letter word beginning with the letter "G."

Some examples were "Gamma Gilt," "Gamma Gout," "Gamma Gult," "Gamma Gant," "Gamma Gabe" and "Gamma Gyro."

The last word of each designation referred to a particular operation, method or source involved — such as the interception of a conversation in a room by elec-

tronic means. One of the designations referred to information about various Soviet-Arab communications. Another was for mail openings, and still another for information from foreign code books.

The next most sensitive designation was given the code word "Delta" and it, too, comprised its own series. Some examples were "Delta Dace," "Delta Dice" and "Delta Dent." 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.