

W. German CIA Said to Spy on Bonn Leaders

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BONN, Oct. 9 A former Cabinet minister charged today that the West German intelligence service had for years spied on the country's top political leaders and other prominent citizens.

The ex-minister, Horst Ehmke, said that the intelligence agency, the Federal Information Service, had compiled what he regarded as illegal dossiers on 54 persons, including two former chancellors and two former presidents.

Testifying before a parliamentary investigating committee, Ehmke said that the list of those put under surveillance included leaders of all the West German political parties and persons prominent in academic, military and other fields.

Among them, Ehmke claimed, were former Chancellors Willy Brandt and Ludwig Erhard and former Presidents Gustav Heinemann and Heinrich Lübke. Others that he named included Christian Democratic leaders Rainer Barzel and Franz-Josef Strauss; Erich Mende, former chairman of the Free Democratic Party; Gen. Hans Speidel, former general inspector of the armed forces, and Simon Wiesenthal, director of the Nazi-hunting Jewish documentation center in Vienna.

Ehmke's sensational allegations came in the course of testimony before the committee investigating the circumstances that enabled an East German spy, Guenter Guillaume, to win a post on Brandt's chancellery staff. The uncovering of Guillaume's spying role triggered Brandt's resignation as chancellor last May.

However, the charges made by Ehmke, who had been minister of chancellery affairs in the Brandt Cabinet, could signal an unpredictable new turn in the investigation. It might turn what has been an inquiry focussed primarily on security clearance procedures into a national controversy about the role of intelligence activities in West German life.

Ehmke's allegations seem certain to stir the same kind of debate that was touched off in the United States following

revelations that the Central Intelligence Agency had been drawn into the Watergate affair.

The Bonn agency, which is commonly called the BND after its German initials, was created by the CIA during the postwar occupation period and was covertly financed by Washington before its absorption into the West German government. For many years, it was referred to in intelligence circles as the Gehlen bureau after Gen. Reinhard Gehlen, its first head.

According to Ehmke's testimony today, the BND's domestic spying activities began during Gehlen's tenure and continued after his retirement in the mid-1960s. Ehmke said he learned of them when the Brandt government took office in 1969 and he was assigned supervision over the intelligence organization as part of his duties in the chancellery office.

He testified that he found the 54 dossiers at Pullach, the BND headquarters. He said that after deciding that they were contrary to the BND's mandate of collecting foreign intelligence, he ordered them destroyed. However, Ehmke said, he learned later that copies of at least some of the dossiers had been preserved.

In further testimony, Ehmke indicated that this domestic spying was only part of what he termed the abuses engaged in by the intelligence service. Although he did not go into specifics, he said that when he assumed his supervisory role in 1969 he found that the BND also was involved in weapons-dealing and in paying West German journalists to plant propaganda in the guise of articles in the press.

Gehlen, a shadowy figure whose espionage career began when he headed Nazi army intelligence on the Soviet front during World War II, also had been scheduled to testify before the committee today.

However, his appearance was deferred indefinitely after his doctors notified the committee that he is ill and not able to travel to Bonn from southern Germany, where he had lived in seclusion since his retirement.