

File Said to Indicate C.I.A. Had a Man in White House

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WASHINGTON, July 9 — The Budget, the Treasury Department staff director of the House Select Committee on Intelligence has seen documents indicating that a high-level member of the Nixon White House staff was reporting to the Central Intelligence Agency on activities in and around the Oval Office, according to a source close to the committee's investigation.

The source, who asked not to be identified, said that the classified C.I.A. materials viewed by A. Searle Field, the staff director, gave no evidence that the C.I.A. "penetration," as he called it, was known to President Nixon or those around him.

Representative Robert W. Kasten Jr., a member of the select committee, said later that "information presented to me by the staff" indicated that there had been similar "infiltration" by the C.I.A. into the Office of Management and

Intelligence Department.

In another development involving the C.I.A., authoritative sources said, that Ashland Oil, Inc., permitted a spy for the agency to operate in Western Europe for some five years as an official of the company. [Page 37.]

A five-page memorandum prepared yesterday by Mr. Field for the 10 select committee members and made available today to The New York Times contained a reference that the source said was based on the document in question.

The memo contained a number of recommended areas of investigation, including "questionable matters not bearing on legitimate C.I.A. functions, but bearing heavily on American citizens," among which, Mr. Field wrote, was "infiltration of

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the executive."

Several of the select committee members whose curiosity was piqued by the reference were reportedly briefed by Mr. Field yesterday and today on what lay behind it.

Mr. Field declined repeated requests from reporters today to elaborate on his use of the word "infiltration" or to say whether the White House had been the agency of the executive branch to which he had referred.

A C.I.A. spokesman would only say that "there was no infiltration, quote unquote, there was no penetration, quote unquote, of the White House" by his agency during the five and a half years of the Nixon Administration.

The source said that while he was not certain, he believed the document that contained the suggestion of a high-level C.I.A. operative inside the White House had been a

report prepared by the Inspector General's office of the C.I.A., possibly sometime in 1973.

Another Possibility

The source pointed out, however, that although a "logical" reading of the C.I.A. document would lead to the conclusion that the agency had placed a covert informer within the upper levels of the Nixon White House, there remained a "slim" chance that the language, which was not entirely explicit, "could possibly have been read another way."

He also confirmed an account of the document yesterday in which Sam Donaldson, a reporter for the American Broadcasting Company, said that the C.I.A. infiltrator had ranked just below H. R. Haldeman, Mr. Nixon's chief of staff, and John D. Ehrlichman, his domestic adviser.

"It was the Oval Office" to which the man had had access, the source emphasized, and "not the White House."

Panel's Fate in Doubt

The future of the select intelligence investigating committee was plunged deeper into doubt today as the House Rules Committee met to decide the fate of the panel, which has been all but immobilized by the animosity between its chairman, Representative Lucien N. Nedzi of Michigan, and most of its other Democratic members.

Three weeks ago, the committee Democrats learned that Mr. Nedzi had been briefed a year earlier on political assassination attempts by the C.I.A. but, as head of a separate House subcommittee charged with overseeing the agency had taken no steps to investigate the matter.

In an intramural committee move, the Democrats attempted to strip Mr. Nedzi of much of his power as chairman of the select panel.

Mr. Nedzi tried to resign his chairmanship, but his effort was rejected by the House. A resolution was introduced by Representative B. F. Sisk, Democrat of California, to abolish the select committee altogether.

Today, the Rules Committee heard several hours of testi-

mony on the Sisk resolution from Democratic and Republican members of the select committee, none of whom wanted to see it done away with altogether.

Among the proposals they tendered were the creation of a new select committee with a new membership, a limit on the jurisdiction of the panel that would confine its investigation to the C.I.A. Alone, joining the House committee to a similar one in the Senate, and the creation of a stronger permanent body that would watch the C.I.A.'s future activities but not investigate its past ones.

The Rules Committee, on which there was general agreement that the present impasse between Mr. Nedzi and the others was intolerable, will vote tomorrow on which of the several alternative courses to pursue in abolishing or restructuring the panel.

In a related development, the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct voted today to begin an investigation of the circumstances in which Representative Michael J. Harrington, one of the select committee members, disclosed last year details of secret House testimony regarding covert C.I.A. political operations in Chile in 1970 and 1971.

Mr. Harrington, a Massachusetts Democrat whose access to similar classified materials has since been cut off by the House Armed Services Committee, of which the C.I.A. Oversight Committee is a part, called yesterday for such an investigation in the belief that it would vindicate his actions.