

# Church of Scientology Announces It Is Investigating the Government

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By Ron Shaffer

Washington Post Staff Writer

The Church of Scientology distributed a news release yesterday announcing that it has been investigating the government for years in an attempt to find "government illegalities and cover-ups" and make them public.

Others "call it spying . . . we call it reform action," church spokesman Arthur J. Maren, said in the news release. "This is a legitimate and traditional function of the Church."

Maren's remarks were distributed to the media yesterday following reports in The Washington Post last Friday and Saturday that the church had embarked on an extensive campaign to identify, attack and discredit enemies.

This campaign, according to a federal affidavit, includes alleged illegal break-ins, bugging and infiltration of government agencies in an attempt to obtain confidential information.

According to informed sources, Scientology files seized by the FBI show that the church staged a hit-and-run accident in Northwest Washington in an attempt to compromise a visiting mayor; forged a rough draft of a scandalous news story in a reporter's name to undermine his credibility, and framed the author of a book critical of Scientology with a fake bomb threat.

The Scientologists have denied all this and have criticized the Post for carrying the stories.

"One can easily get the idea that The Post is jumping at what they think is a stick of candy which is a promotion of the government's case," Maren told a Scientology rally in Los Angeles Saturday night. "I think it shows some shortsightedness. Perhaps in time The Post will realize it's been had." In the news release yesterday Maren asserted that when "corrupt" government officials "start using press such as The Washington Post for smear campaigns to try and invalidate the traditional reform role of the Church we decided that we have to go public."

Maren denied that the church regards anyone as enemies. "As a church which believes that man is basically good and devotes itself to helping others, we have no enemies," he said.

Maren announced the formation of a national "spy network of honest citizens" which is to "expose and publicize illegal government activities." It is being called the American Citizens

for Honesty in Government (ACHG), and Maren called on "every honest government employee" to report improprieties to the "ACHG Ethics Committee."

Grey Layton, spokesman for the Founding Church of Scientology here in Washington, said yesterday that the new group is in the formation stages, and has as yet no structure other than Maren as leader. He said all citizens are invited to contribute. "Why keep this thing to ourselves?" Layton said. "We're asking everyone in the country to be involved."

Maren said the target of the FBI raid on Scientology files last summer was a program the church calls "Snow

White." This was a confidential endeavor to obtain material and turn it over to government agencies and congressional committees, Maren said. "Apparently some of the dishonest bureaucrats found the Snow White program upsetting," he said.

Among the accomplishments of "Snow White," he said, was the filing of a \$750 million lawsuit against government agencies; for "harassment conspiracy campaigns"; pioneer efforts in the use of the Freedom of Information Act to gain information; and publication of 200 pages of Internal Revenue Service documents classified as "For Official Use Only."

Asked yesterday if any information was obtained illegally, as the government alleges, spokesman Layton said, "Not that I know of. The government has yet to prove any of its allegations."

FBI agents and federal prosecutors, following court rulings earlier this month, are sifting through church files and presenting evidence bit by bit to a grand jury.

The church, called a business by some and a philosophy by others, was founded by L. Ron Hubbard in the early 1950s. The church claims about 3 million members in the United States.