

Plot to Kill Ford Reported to FBI

SAN FRANCISCO, March 15 (AP)—The FBI received "unsubstantiated information" about a week ago that a member of a terrorist group might have been planning to assassinate President Ford and Ronald Reagan, the chief FBI agent here said today.

Charles Bates told a news conference that the reported plot was said to be planned for the Republican National Convention in Kansas City in August.

In Washington, FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley said the matter was continuing "to receive intensive investigative attention."

Kelley said "unsubstantiated information has recently been received by the FBI that a member of a terrorist group was possibly planning to attempt assassination" of Mr. Ford and Reagan. Kelley said all available information had been furnished to the Secret Service.

Bates declined to give any details on the source of the information, which he said so far was considered to be without substantiation.

"The information did come to our attention in San Francisco and was furnished to headquarters," he said. "I can't say where it came from. We don't know what terrorist group."

"It [the information] did not come from documents we received in any case," Bates said in answer to a question about whether the information stemmed from a raid Feb. 21 on a makeshift bomb factory in Richmond, Calif.

Six alleged members of the mysterious Emiliano Zapata Unit were arrested in that raid. Five of the six have since been indicted on explosives charges. Authorities have said that they know little about the Zapata group, including its size.

Asked whether the threat was considered serious, Secret Service spokesman Ken Lynch said: "All threats are serious, if indeed they are threats."

Pressed for further details about the source of the threat, Bates said, "I can't tell you . . . We don't know who. I don't know whether it was one member or more than one member."

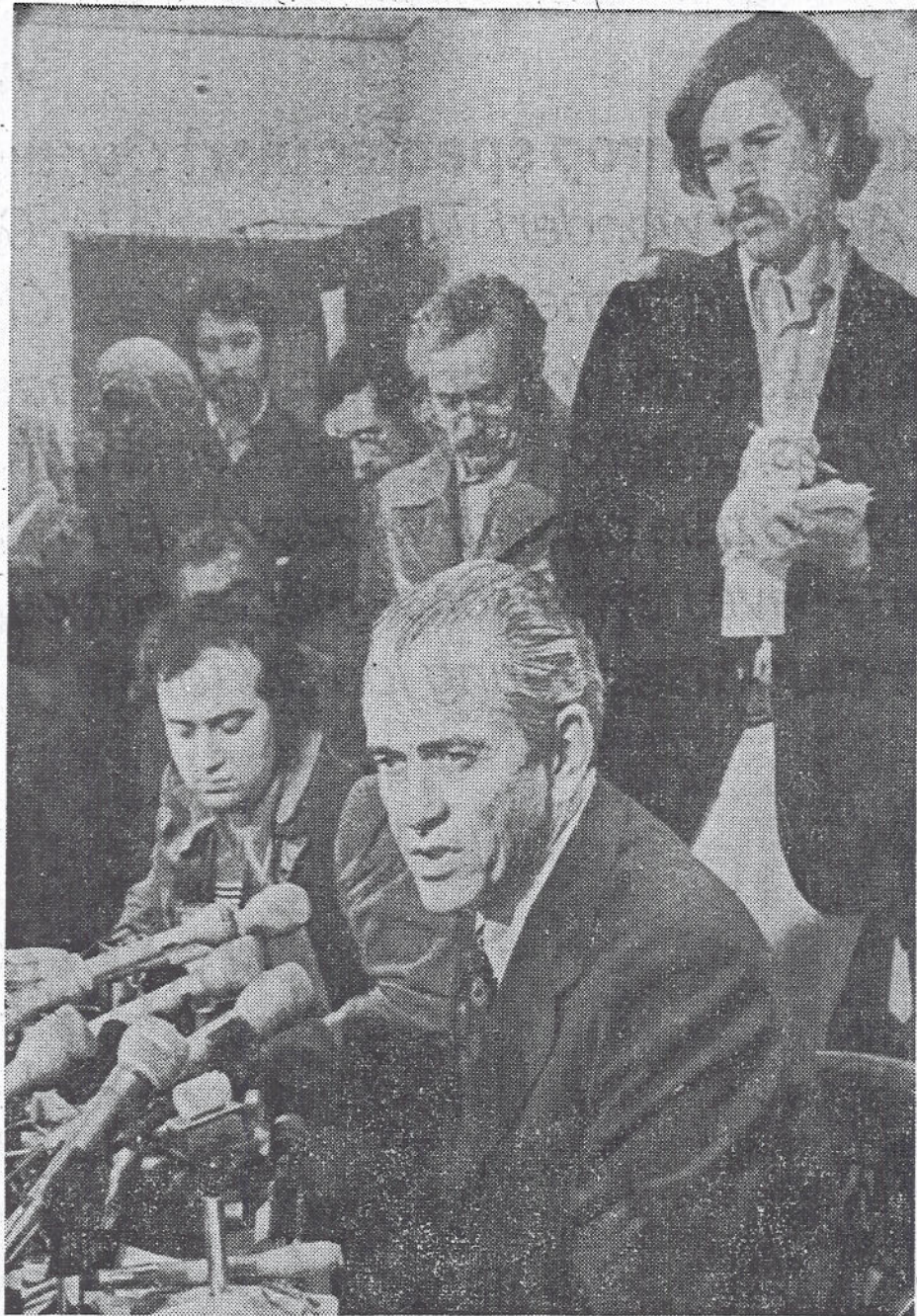
Asked whether it was one member or more than one member.

Asked whether the information had come by telephone, he replied, "I can't say."

Mr. Ford and Reagan are contenders for the Republican presidential nomination, to be made at the Kansas City convention, which gets under way on Aug. 16.

The Chicago Tribune said in a story from San Francisco that Justice Department sources said the plot involved a commando-style assassination team of persons from the San Francisco Bay area. The newspaper said it was informed that the plot was discovered while it still was in its early planning stage.

The Justice Department learned of the plot from an informant who was "a part of the violent underground in Northern California," the



Associated Press

FBI's Charles Bates tells of "unsubstantiated information" on terrorist plot.

Tribune said. It said its sources believe "the plan apparently was being designed to throw the convention into complete chaos."