

5-18-73

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CIA Involvement

Helms Thought Nixon OK'd Calls

Washington

Former CIA director Richard A. Helms had reason to believe President Nixon sanctioned the White House effort last summer to involve the Central Intelligence Agency in a coverup of the Watergate scandal, Senator Henry M. Jackson said yesterday.

After three hours of testimony by Helms and other CIA officials before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Jackson and Senator Stuart Symington (Dem-Mo) said none of the witnesses could say positively, however, whether Mr. Nixon was informed of his top aides' requests to the CIA.

"It is hard for me to visualize that the President knew nothing about it," Symington said. "All witnesses said they did not know if the President knew about it."

Helms was summoned to Washington from his post as U.S. ambassador to Iran to testify about the alleged efforts of White House aides to solicit CIA help in a secret investigation of Daniel Ellsberg in the Pentagon Papers case, and in a later scheme to cover up campaign funds linked to the Watergate scandal which passed through a Mexican bank.

"I think there is conclusive evidence of a premeditated plan and design to use the CIA as a coverup," Jackson said. "Thank God we have men of integrity in the CIA who refused to be used."

"Mr. Helms, when called on by White House aides H. R. Haldeman and John Erlichman, and others, had reason to believe their requests had sanction from the President of the United States," Jackson said.

"He had the right to believe that it came from the top."

The CIA cooperated with the White House requests at first, according to Senate testimony, until White House counsel John Dean III tried to pressure the agency to block an FBI investigation of financial manipulations in Mexico.

Then, Helms testified Wednesday before the Senate subcommittee on intelligence operations, an end was put to it.

Neither Helms nor his principal aides, CIA deputy director Lieutenant General Vernon Walters, and former CIA deputy director General Robert Cushman, would comment to newsmen on whether the President was fully informed. *United Press*