

1970 Spying-Plan Meetings Seen as Way to Prod Hoover

7/14/73

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Meetings instigated by President Nixon in 1970 that led to an elaborate domestic surveillance plan were actually "an effort to pressure" J. Edgar Hoover into beefing up the FBI's intelligence operations, a Congressman asserted yesterday.

Rep. Lucien N. Nedzi (D-Mich.), chairman of the House Armed Services Intelligence Subcommittee, said he drew that conclusion after hearing 2½ hours of closed testimony from Tom Charles Huston, a former White House aide.

Huston, now an Indianapolis lawyer, attended the meetings with representatives of the FBI, Central Intelligence Agency, and other security units. Upon their

recommendations, he drafted the plan, part of which, he said he warned the President was "clearly illegal."

Mr. Nixon, however, has said that he approved the plan on July 2, 1970, and rescinded it five days later after Hoover vehemently objected to it. The plan called for easing restrictions on government-directed burglaries of "security targets," opening their mail, monitoring their overseas phone calls, and recruiting college campus spies.

Asked if the meetings of the ad hoc Interagency Group on Domestic Intelligence from June 5 to mid-July, 1970, indicated that the President had lost confidence in the FBI, Nedzi replied, "That was the impres-

sion that was created" by Huston's testimony.

Huston, the congressman reported, said that the then White House Chief of Staff, H. R. Haldeman, thought White House officials "were not getting the information they desired" from Hoover on internal security threats.

"I still have difficulty understanding why this (ad hoc) committee was set up except to use these other (intelligence) agencies in handling Mr. Hoover," Nedzi commented.

Mr. Nixon, in his May 22 statement on the Watergate case, said he called the ad hoc group and attended its initial meeting because of campus violence and bombings throughout the country.

Also attending the first meeting were Hoover (who died in May, 1972); then CIA Director Richard Helms; Gen. Donald V. Bennett, then director of the Defense Intelligence Agency; Adm. Noel Gaylor, then head of the National Security Agency; Haldeman, and John D. Ehrlichman, who was then Mr. Nixon's domestic adviser.

Huston told the subcommittee that when approval for the plan was rescinded, Haldeman issued a "verbal order" to him to contact the agencies and ask them to return to the White House the memos on the plan. Huston said he made the contact through an official in the White House Situation Room and that the memos were returned.

Last week the White House declined to say whether the rescission order was written or verbal.

Nedzi's subcommittee is looking into involvement of foreign intelligence-gathering agencies, particularly the CIA, in domestic affairs. Helms, in secret testimony, has told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the CIA did not spy on the antiwar movement in this country.

But Huston wrote in one 1970 memo that while he had expected the CIA to refuse to cooperate with the ad hoc committee, Helms "was most cooperative and helpful."

Nedzi said yesterday that he believes that "CIA involvement was minimal." He explained that he based his opinion on the fact that the plan itself did not seek to expand the CIA's domestic role, which under the 1947 National Security Act is supposed to be severely limited.

All the plan sought to do was increase the CIA's surveillance of Americans traveling abroad, but the agency already had that power, Nedzi said. The congressman said he believes the plan was never put into effect, a point disputed by antiwar activists.