

Helms Is Called In Ellsberg Case

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From Combined Services

WASHINGTON — Former CIA director Richard Helms is returning here from Iran for questioning about the transfer of CIA documents on the Pentagon Papers case to the Justice Dept. last October.

Helms left the CIA post to become the U. S. Ambassador to Iran a month after the documents changed hands.

Friends of Helms say he was shocked by Nixon's action in replacing him at the CIA.

CIA and Congressional sources told the Chicago-Sun Times yesterday that Helms is coming to testify in the House and Senate inquiries into the CIA's role in the burglary at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, in Beverly Hills.

The sources said the inquiries have been broadened to include a charge by James W. McCord Jr. that political pressure was put on him and the other Watergate conspirators to blame the CIA for the break-in at Democratic national headquarters last June.

Congressional Interest

Members of the one House and two Senate subcommittees on the CIA said they were particularly interested in exploring a possible connection between Helms' handling of the Ellsberg episode and his mysterious dismissal by Nixon.

The members said they wanted answers to several key questions: Why did the CIA withhold its information on the Ellsberg episode from the Justice Dept. for 14 months from August, 1971, to October of last year?

Did the CIA suppress the facts on orders from the White House? Did Helms pass them along just before the 1972 Presidential election to preserve the CIA's reputation as a non-political or-

ganization? Was he fired in retaliation?

Helms was called to Camp David shortly after the Presidential election in November and told by Nixon he was being replaced by James R. Schlesinger, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. Friends of Helms say he has never received an adequate explanation for the action.

McCord, in a memo to the Senate committee investigating the Watergates scandal, said he was "convinced the White House had fired Helms in order to put its own man in control at CIA, but as well to lay the foundation for claiming that the Watergate operation was a CIA operation and now to be able to claim that Helms was fired for it."

Closed Session

Schlesinger refused to comment on McCord's allegations in a brief meeting with reporters yesterday after his closed-door appearance before the Senate appropriations subcommittee on the CIA.

Schlesinger did confirm published reports that the CIA provided equipment to E. Howard Hunt Jr. that was used in the Ellsberg burglary.

He also acknowledged that former White House adviser John D. Ehrlichman smoothed the way for the aid in a phone call to Gen. Robert E. Cushman Jr., then deputy CIA director and now Commandant of the Marine Corps.

But Schlesinger insisted the CIA had no knowledge that the equipment would be used in the burglary.

"It was an ill-advised act," he said. "Regulations will be changed to prevent these kinds of activities from occurring again." He said he had ordered a complete review of CIA activities to make sure they fall within the law.

The CIA is prohibited by law from conducting intel-

ligence operations inside the U. S.

In a related development, Attorney General designate Elliot L. Richardson has testified that Ehrlichman could have tried to conceal the White House role in the burglary.

Richardson, using extremely guarded phrases before the Senate Judiciary Committee reviewing his nomination yesterday, Nixon decided before April 22 to disclose White House involvement in the break-in to Pentagon Papers trial Judge Matthew Byrne, in Los Angeles.

Egil (Bud) Krogh, who quit as Undersecretary of Transportation after confessing that he directed the burglary team as a White House aide in 1971, discussed the matter with him on May 1, Richardson said.

"He certainly had from some White House source a feeling that disclosure by him would be inconsistent with the ground rules then in effect," Richardson said.

Sen. Kennedy (D-Mass.) asked if Krogh told Richardson that Ehrlichman had advised him to remain silent about the Ellsberg break-in for national security reasons.

"I don't recall his saying that," Richardson said in the classic answer of the unresponsive witness. "I can't recall and I don't remember asking from what source he got that feeling."

Kennedy Question

During the exchange with Kennedy, the Cabinet officer shifted in his chair, cast his eyes at the table and carefully selected his words before answering.

"Could it have been Ehrlichman?" Kennedy asked again.

"It could have been Mr. Ehrlichman," Richardson replied, speaking slowly.

The panel continues its questioning of Richardson today.