

Ford Orders

Probe of CIA

By Kissinger

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A presidential inquiry was ordered yesterday into allegations that the Central Intelligence Agency conducted illegal domestic surveillance especially during the Nixon administration. In addition, up to four congressional investigations were proposed on the same charges.

President Ford, who is vacationing at Vail, Colo., directed Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger to produce a report "in a matter of days" on the allegations. Kissinger's inquiry will be conducted in his dual role as presidential national security adviser and head of the National Security Council staff.

Kissinger, aides said, has asked Richard M. Helms, now ambassador to Iran, to report on the charges that center on Helms' tenure as director of the CIA from 1966 to 1973. William E. Colby, the current CIA director also will submit a report for this inquiry.

Investigations into the allegations of illegal CIA activities were announced by Chairman John C. Stennis of the Senate Armed Services Committee; by Sen. John Sparkman (D-Ala.), due to become chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in the new Congress in January, and by Rep. Lucien N. Nedzi (D-Mich.), chairman of the House Armed Services subcommittee on intelligence. In addition, Rep. Thomas E. Morgan (D-Pa.) chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said he has started consultations about a possible inquiry by his committee.

This surge of projected investigations followed charges published by The New York Times on Sunday that intelligence files on at least 10,000 Americans were maintained by the CIA in a special unit, and that the CIA conducted surveillance of groups campaigning against the war in Vietnam. In addition, apart from antiwar surveillance, the CIA was charged with illegal break-ins, wiretapping and other surveillance in the United States.

Under CIA's charter, the agency is forbidden to conduct police and internal security operations in the United States, with that responsibility

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assigned to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The accusations about massive CIA surveillance of antiwar demonstrators were new. The charges of CIA break-ins and other domestic surveillance activities beyond its congressionally authorized jurisdiction have been raised before in many forms, but never have been subjected to extensive public investigation.

The multiplicity of investigations discussed yesterday seemed likely to break the inhibitions that for years have headed off a public airing of CIA operations in the twilight zone between covert foreign and domestic activities.

Informed sources acknowledged yesterday that this could lead to embarrassing disclosures of past CIA operations in this country which could raise questions of illegality. Some sources maintained, however, that the allegations that the CIA was engaged in massive operations against antiwar groups in this country are considerably exaggerated. In either case, the agency's operations now seem likely to face exceptional challenge.

White House press secretary Ron Nessen said yesterday that "the President is trying to find out what happened, if anything."

Nessen repeated, as President Ford said on Sunday in Vail, that CIA Director Colby informed the President on Sunday that "nothing comparable" to what was alleged as improper CIA operations is now under way, and that the President told Colby he would not tolerate any activities of that kind in his administration.

However, Nessen disclosed yesterday that Colby had informed the President several days ago, prior to the publication of the charges by The New York Times, that the Times was contemplating such a story.

Nessen said he was uncertain when Mr. Ford received that notification, and Nessen did not spell out the President's reaction to Colby's information. Nessen did not explain why no presidential inquiry was ordered until yesterday.