

Ford Is Reported Told That Agency Retained Files About Citizens

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 31—The Central Intelligence Agency has told President Ford that its agents maintained thousands of files on American citizens and participated in a wide-ranging program of electronic surveillances, break-ins and the surreptitious inspection of mail inside the United States, well-placed Government sources said today.

The sources said that William E. Colby, the Director of Central Intelligence, did not provide any specific instances of wrongdoing in his report on the spying allegations that was submitted to the President last week, but instead listed the domestic activities by category.

Mr. Colby's report, the sources said, reflected the fact that it had been ordered by the President in response to the spying allegations reported on Dec. 22 in The New York Times.

"The report says that The New York Times charges this or that, and then says here are the facts," one source noted,



United Press International
William E. Colby

adding that the C.I.A. document seemed to be limited only to those areas of wrongdoing outlined in the initial Times dispatch.

"While I thought your article exaggerated the importance of the issue," the source said, "basically it was correct as to the facts."

In its Dec. 22 report, The Times quoted well-placed sources as saying that the C.I.A. had violated its charter by mounting a massive intelligence operation in the late nineteen-sixties and early nineteen-seventies against the

Electronic Surveillance and Break-Ins Cited —Charter at Issue

antiwar movement and other dissident groups in the United States. Intelligence files on at least 10,000 American citizens were compiled, the sources were quoted as saying.

The Los Angeles Times said today that Mr. Colby's report acknowledged that the C.I.A. kept files on more than 9,000 Americans and stated that there were at least three illegal break-ins.

The New York Times's sources confirmed that account, but added that Mr. Colby had also told the President of electronic surveillances and the surreptitious opening of mail. The report did not say specifically whether the electronic surveillances involved bugging or wire-tapping or both.

In each case, however, the sources said, the Colby report did not say who was targeted inside the United States and for what reason. "It just said that there was X number of files and X number of break-ins," a

Continued on Page 22, Column 1

Report to Ford

Continued From Page 1, Col. 3
source said.

In the case of the mail covers, which have not been used by the Federal Bureau of Investigation since the mid-nineteen-sixties, the source said, Mr. Colby stated that the operations were approved in advance by various Attorneys General or Postmasters General.

No such contention was made for the break-ins and buggings, the source said. Some of the illegal domestic activities are known to have taken place as long as 20 years ago.

Asked whether he considered the Colby report to be complete, one source who has had first-hand access to the document, said, "That depends on what you mean by complete."

"What it does," he added, "is go into some detail on some of the charges in The Times."

"Basically Colby doesn't attempt to justify what was done," the source explained, "He just lays out the facts."

"Not the End-All"

Asked further whether the report appeared to be a satisfactory response, the source said, "It's satisfactory only insofar as it gives a factual description of the allegation in the first Times article."

"Clearly," the source said, "this [the Colby report] is not the end-all to the investigation. Obviously, there are questions left to be answered."

The Times's sources also described the C.I.A. report as being far less voluminous than was indicated by published reports last week. Those reports, which were not challenged by officials in the White House press office, depicted the Colby

document as being more than 50 pages in length with various appendices.

In fact, the sources said, the document included a number of papers and materials not directly pertinent to the charges of domestic spying, and it was those pages that added to its bulk.

The sources further expressed bafflement over the concern expressed last week by the White House over the possible problems for some foreign countries that would result from publication of the Colby report. "This is only a problem for foreign governments in terms of 'Here's another example of how we can't keep our mouths shut,'" one official said.

Earlier today, The Associated Press quoted what it said was a senior adviser to President Ford as saying that he understood that the Colby document

substantially supported the allegations reported in The New York Times.

Those allegations have resulted in calls for at least four investigations by the next Congress, which convenes in two weeks. In addition, some Senators and officials have urged formation of a special prosecutor's office to investigate and possibly bring criminal charges.

President Ford, who received the Colby report Friday while on his ski-work visit to Vail, Colo., has made it known that he will not discuss the report or the C.I.A. until after his return to Washington Thursday. Mr. Ford will meet then with Secretary of State Kissinger and Mr. Colby to determine what steps to take.

At least four high-ranking former C.I.A. officials, all members of the counterintelligence division, which was alleged to have participated in the illegal

activities, have resigned since the initial Times story.

Under the National Security Act of 1947, setting up the C.I.A., the intelligence agency was explicitly barred from internal security functions, even in the case of foreign espionage. That function was to be left to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In a related development, Vice President Rockefeller told newsmen today in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where he is vacationing, that the C.I.A. or any other institution that breaks the law should be punished.

But the newly confirmed Vice President added that the "C.I.A. is in Mr. Kissinger's area and I don't intend to interfere." Mr. Rockefeller and Mr. Kissinger have been vacationing with their wives since last week at the Dorado Beach Hotel in San Juan.