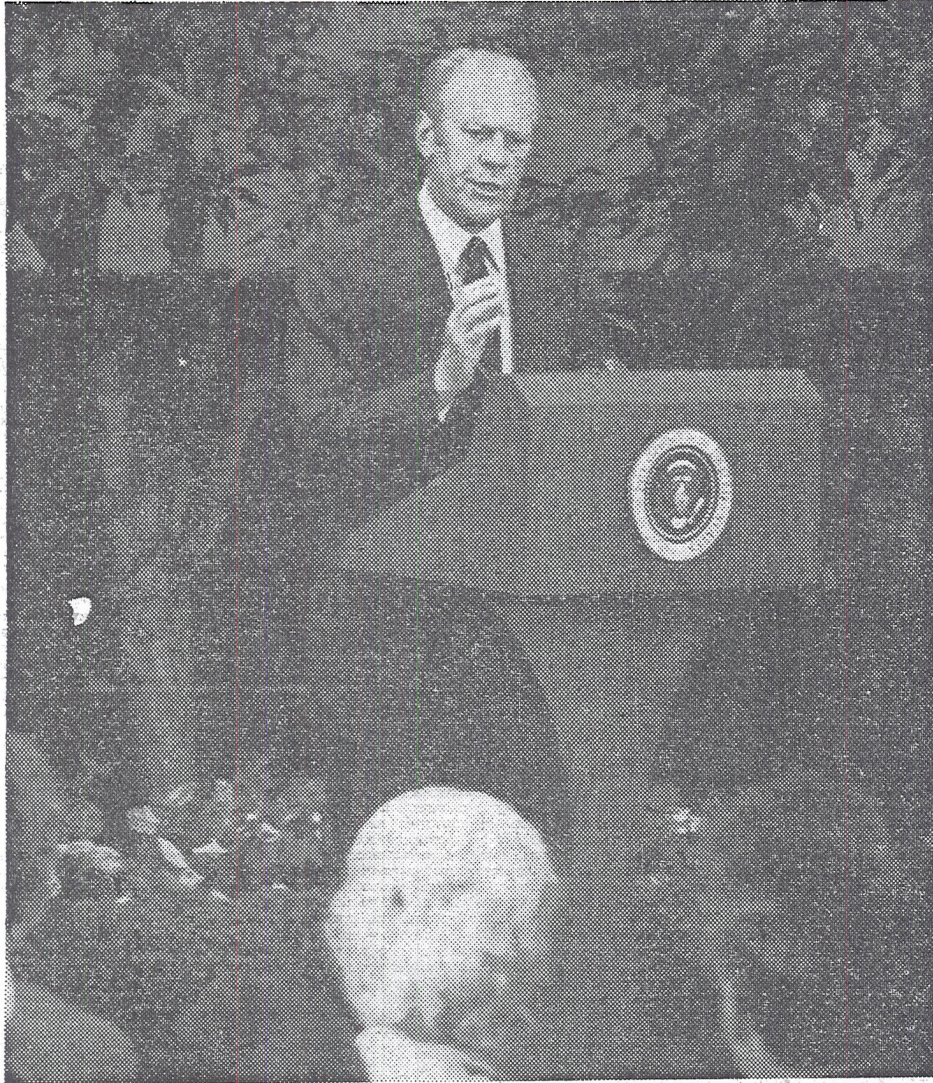


FORD WILL SUBMIT REPORT ON C.I.A. TO JUSTICE DEPT. AND TO CONGRESS, WITH DATA ON ASSASSINATION ISSUE



The New York Times/Mike Lison

President Ford last night at his news conference in the White House Rose Garden

FURTHER INQUIRY

JUN 10 1975

President to Withhold Material on Plots From the Public

NYTimes

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 9 —

President Ford announced tonight that he was forwarding the Rockefeller Commission report on the Central Intelligence Agency, including information dealing with allegations of plots to assassinate foreign leaders, to the Department of Justice for possible prosecution and to two Congressional committees.

The President said that he would release the commission report tomorrow but would

*Transcript of news conference
will be found on Page 20.*

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withhold from the public the information on assassination plots because it was "incomplete and extremely sensitive." He said the Department of Justice was the appropriate agency to conclude the assassination inquiry and decide whether the law had been violated.

The announcement, at a nationally televised news conference in the White House Rose Garden, followed by three hours the first White House confirmation that there appeared to be substance to published accounts of plans by the C.I.A. for assassinations of foreign leaders as long ago as the Eisenhower Administration.

Ford Urges 'Prudence'

Mr. Ford said that he personally did not want to pass judgment on the activities of his predecessors regarding assassination plots. And he cautioned Congress to "reserve judgment" and use the "utmost prudence" in evaluating such information.

"I'm totally opposed to political assassinations," Mr. Ford declared. He said that his decision to make both the secret assassination material and the formal Rockefeller commission report available to the Attorney General and to Congressional investigators would show "there's not going to be any possibility of a cover-up" of any C.I.A. wrongdoing.

Mr. Ford brushed aside suggestions, which some of his subordinates had made, that Mr. Rockefeller's handling of the culmination of the commission's investigation had been arrogant and embarrassing to the President.

"It hasn't embarrassed me," the President said. "The Vice President and I understood each other perfectly."

Earlier today, Robert A. Maheu, the reputed liaison between the C.I.A. and organized crime figures in an alleged agency-inspired plot to kill Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba, took the Fifth Amendment today in declining to answer questions about the purported arrangement from members of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities. [Page 21.]

The President said at his

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news conference tonight that the Attorney General could make any determinations as to prosecution of individuals for either domestic or international wrongdoing as part of the nation's intelligence gathering efforts.

Mr. Ford said that material he had seen relating to the assassination allegations—an 86-page summary of information gathered by the commission—involved events dating back to “late 1959 and running up to 1967 or 1968.” That period would embrace the Administrations of Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson.

Roderick M. Hills, counsel to the President, said in an earlier press briefing that there was “a sound basis and a sound need for the investigation” of the alleged plots that Mr. Ford had asked the commission headed by Vice President Rockefeller to undertake.

But the White House official said that the investigation had been incomplete and that the commission had not advised the President until two weeks ago that it was limiting its inquiry to domestic ramifications of the possible assassination plots.

The decision to separate the assassination evidence from the commission's public report on domestic activities of the C.I.A. and to keep the assassination material from becoming public has evoked criticism since it was announced last week.

Mr. Hills said that the President was satisfied, despite the termination of the Rockefeller panel's inquiry without completing the assassination study, that the full story of the alleged plots would emerge.

Eisenhower Administration Link

Mr. Hills, who was the White House liaison officer with the commission, also confirmed in reply to questions that the alleged planning to assassinate Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba in the early nineteen-sixties may have begun in the Administration of President Eisenhower.

“It is true,” Mr. Hills said, that the evidence indicated that “the allegations go back before the Kennedy Administration.”

Until recently, most of the

published accounts of the alleged plots to kill Mr. Castro had centered on whether they had been done with the knowledge of the late President Kennedy.

Asked if the possible involvement of the Eisenhower Administration had played a part in the decision to withhold the Rockefeller commission's findings on the alleged assassination plots Mr. Hills replied: “Not at all.”

He said that the White House had operated, throughout the inquiry by Mr. Rockefeller's commission, on the assumption that any assassination findings would be presented separately to Mr. Ford.

Warren Panel Backed

Mr. Hills did say that the commission's public report would endorse the findings of the Warren commission a decade ago that Lee Harvey Oswald had operated alone in assassinating President Kennedy in 1963. The Rockefeller commission “sees no room for doubt” about the earlier findings, despite recent suggestions that the shooting of Mr. Kennedy might have been in retaliation for the alleged efforts to kill Mr. Castro, Mr. Hills said.

At one point, Mr. Hills said that it would be “inappropriate” for him to state whether material he had seen from the Rockefeller commission and other data assembled to be given to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities would prove with certainty that assassination plotting had taken place.

Church Cited ‘Hard Evidence’

But he added that, on the basis of the materials, “I can certainly say there was a sound basis and a sound need for the investigation.”

There have been various published reports that United States intelligence officials, and perhaps others in the White House, had considered taking steps to kill not only Mr. Castro but also President Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic and President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam. Both were assassinated: Mr. Trujillo in early 1961 and Mr. Diem in late 1963.

The statement by Mr. Hills represented the most substantive confirmation by the White

House that plans, which no official has said were ever carried out, had been drafted to kill one or more foreign leaders. Mr. Hills made the remark five days after Senator Frank F. Church, the Idaho Democrat who is chairman of the Senate investigating committee, said he had heard “hard evidence” of assassination planning.

Despite the significance of such evidence, Mr. Hills refused to characterize President Ford as unhappy about the failure of the Rockefeller commission to complete the investigation of the charges.

Mr. Hills said that the commission realized early last month that it had insufficient time and resources to complete the assassination portion of its investigation. The President could have asked the commission to carry on with the inquiry, but the panel already had gone two months longer than planned and its members and staff were preparing to return to their customary occupations, he said.

“The President may have to ask for a further investigation” if the Senate committee and the White House cannot, in concert, resolve the assassination issues, Mr. Hills said.

“I can assure that he will if it is not a complete investigation.”

Mr. Hills did not make clear exactly how the Rockefeller commission, or its staff, had limited the scope of the assassination investigation.

Impetus for Inquiry C.I.A.

The commission was established Jan. 4 to investigate charges, published by The New York Times, that the C.I.A. had engaged in widespread, illegal domestic activities. Mr. Ford gave the panel the additional assignment of inquiring into the alleged assassination plots three months later, after other published charges.

Because of the domestic nature of the commission's original charter, and because one early news report alleged that the C.I.A. had made a deal with organized crime figures to try to kill Mr. Castro, the commission saw its inquiry in terms of domestic activities, Mr. Hills said.

Not until two weeks ago did the White House learn and not until 10 days ago did Mr. Ford

find out, Mr. Hills said, that the commission and its staff had “decided at the outset that the purpose of their investigation of assassination plots would be limited to those plots that had significant domestic activities.”

“That self-limitation had its impact upon the over-all course of the investigation that wasn't apparent to us until sometime after May 1,” he added.

Mr. Hills said that according to materials he had seen from the commission, “they did a thorough job on what they decided to investigate” but could not plumb the depths of the subject without considerably more time and effort.

He refused twice to answer a question as to Mr. Ford's reaction when he learned of the panel's limitation. Finally, Mr. Hills said that the President “expressed concern” that the allegations be “satisfactorily examined” but was confident that they would be.

He said that his own office had material going beyond the scope of the Rockefeller commission findings because it was responsible for providing data to the Senate committee.

Mr. Hills said that there would always be some “ambiguities” involved in the inquiry, because no one could be certain what various officials might have said about assassination plans in conversation.

Mr. Ford's underlying interest, he said, was to be sure that his policy forbidding assassination plots or other illegal clandestine activities would be obeyed.

“I don't believe we will want to be a Monday morning quarterback” who would “second-guess” what took place in Administrations 15 or 20 years ago, Mr. Hills added.