

Ford to Ask His Top Aides For Advice on a C.I.A. Bill

Nessen, Expecting Quick Action, Reports President Will Then Make Decision About What Legislation to Seek

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WASHINGTON, June 11 — The White House said today that President Ford planned to seek comments "as soon as possible" from the Secretaries of State, Defense and the Treasury, the Attorney General and the Director of Central Intelligence on the recommendations of the Rockefeller commission.

Ron Nessen, President Ford's press secretary, said that the replies should be back to the White House "in a matter of weeks at most" and with them in hand, Mr. Ford would make his decision on what legislation regarding changes in the C.I.A. he would recommend to Congress.

"The President considers the subject matter important," Mr. Nessen said, "and I would look for quick action."

The Rockefeller commission, in its report yesterday on its investigation of United States intelligence agencies, recommended that Mr. Ford ask Congress to create a joint oversight committee for the intelligence community and remove the

part-time oversight responsibilities from the Armed Services Committees of the two houses.

This brought immediate support from several Senators and Representatives. Senators Lowell P. Weicker Jr. of Connecticut and Howard H. Baker Jr. of Tennessee, both Republicans and former members of the Senate Watergate committee, already have a bill before Congress to create such a committee.

Senator Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho, chairman of the Senate committee that is investigating the intelligence community, said that the information disclosed in the Rockefeller commission's report was "in all likelihood just the tip of the iceberg." But Mr. Church stressed that he was not accusing the commission of attempting to cover-up any matters.

Meanwhile, Department of Justice lawyers began their investigation of whether any domestic activities of the Central

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Intelligence Agency or its involvement in plots to kill foreign leaders warranted prosecution.

The lawyers will sift 12 filing cabinets of evidence compiled by the commission in its five-month investigation of the

C.I.A.

The Eight-member commission, headed by Vice President Rockefeller, completed its report last week, and the findings were made public yesterday. According to the commission, several domestic activities of the C.I.A. were clearly against the law.

Statute of Limitations

What has troubled Justice Department lawyers on this question and on the matter of assassinations is whether the statute of limitations may have run on the various charges involved.

Sources familiar with the Rockefeller commission's investigation said that they had not examined the question of whether apparent violations fell within time limits of the statute.

The initial evidence collected by the Rockefeller commission on plots to assassinate foreign leaders led several members and staff aides to believe that it warranted a "thorough, grueling investigation," once source familiar with the commission's operations said.

According to other Administration sources, however, the commission was ill-equipped to continue because of time and staff restrictions. Moreover, they said, the early evidence indicated that any group conducting such an inquiry would "have to have subpoena power," a power that the commission did not have and would have had difficulty arranging for midway in the investigation.

Several of these sources said that although there was need for further investigation, they were not sure that the findings should ever be made public.

"I'm not convinced I want my country to get up on a pedestal and say it planned to assassinate people," one source said.

According to sources familiar with the Rockefeller commission's inquiry, possibly the most important tool in the investigation of assassination plots is the subpoena power.

"We had asked Maheu [Robert Maheu, former aide to Howard R. Hughes], and he had refused to come," said one source involved in the investigation, "but the Senate committee has subpoenaed him and with the use of immunity will get his testimony."

Mr. Maheu was sought by the Rockefeller commission because it had evidence that he was the liaison between the C.I.A. and two men with Mafia connections who were recruited in the early nineteen-sixties in an alleged plot to kill Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba.