

The CIA 'Contact' In White House

Former Nixon Aide Is Named

Washington

The controversy over possible CIA infiltration of the White House grew yesterday after a retired Air Force colonel said former presidential aide Alexander Butterfield was a CIA contact officer.

What was meant by a contact officer remained unclear, but the CIA and the White House said neither Butterfield nor anyone else was spying on administration officials for the Central Intelligence Agency.

Butterfield, best known for disclosing existence of former President's Nixon's taping system, could not be reached for comment.

At one time during the Nixon administration, Butterfield was in charge of White House administration and security.

He later served as head of the Federal Aviation Administration, resigning from the post earlier this year.

Retired Air Force Colonel L. Fletcher Prouty, a former liaison officer between the Air Force and CIA, said in a televised interview with CBS that Butterfield was a contact officer "as I was at the Defense Department." The job was to "open the door for CIA operation," he said.

He made similar statements in an interview with NBC.

Then, under repeated questioning by reporters, Prouty ruled out the possibility that Butterfield might have spied on the White House for the CIA and said Butterfield was the person the agency would contact if it needed White House assistance on a sensitive project.

Prouty said he first learned of a CIA-Butterfield connection in 1971 from two



L. FLETCHER PROUTY



A. M. BUTTERFIELD

Prouty called him a CIA 'contact officer'

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Air Force officers who had worked for the CIA for long periods of time. The officers suggested Prouty contact Butterfield through a Washington public relations firm which provided cover for CIA agents.

Prouty said he met E. Howard Hunt, a former CIA agent and later convicted Watergate burglar, who agreed to contact Butterfield to help arrange White House support for a group seeking the release of Indochina prisoners of war, including undercover CIA agents.

He said he did not know for certain if Butterfield was on the CIA payroll at the time.

CIA spokesman, who originally had refused all comment on the Prouty claim, later said Butterfield "has never been assigned to or worked for the CIA in any capacity."

That statement appeared to conflict with an official White House biography of Butterfield that described him as having participated in "Cuban brigade affairs relating back to the Bay of Pigs affair," the CIA's aborted invasion of Cuba.

Elaborating on its statement, the CIA said Butterfield was granted access to sensitive CIA information in 1959 while working under the deputy chief of staff for Air Force personnel. But it said he "was in no way under the authority of the agency."

At the White House, the CIA said, Butterfield required access to intelligence given only to recipients holding special clearances. "He was provided these clearances," it said.

The CIA did say, however,

that "the exchange of government employees by detailing them to other agencies or departments, as Director (William E.) Colby has pointed out, is a long-established and widespread practice in government.

"Those persons detailed to other agencies respond to the authority of the agency to which they are detailed. This form of duty is in no way a 'penetration' or 'infiltration' of the receiving agency or department."

Presidential press secretary Ron Nessen said the White House has "no information to substantiate the allegation that a member of the previous administration was a secret CIA agent or indeed any kind of agent."

Butterfield's wife called Prouty's claim "absolutely false."

Later in the day, Prouty was questioned behind closed doors before a House intelligence subcommittee.

Senator Howard Baker (Rep-Tenn.), a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said he previously had been aware of rumors regarding Butterfield and the CIA but that Prouty's statements added "a new dimension."

Baker added that it would be "a huge coincidence" if the man who was custodian of the recorded Oval Office conversations which ultimately forced Mr. Nixon to resign was in fact a CIA man.

Asked by reporters if he knew of any other White House officials with CIA connections, Prouty said that in the early 1960s Alexander Haig had served as an Army liaison officer with the CIA. But Prouty cautioned that he did not know wheth-

er Haig has had relation with the CIA since then.

Prouty's statements came just two days after statements were made by members of the House intelligence panel that staff investigators had seen evidence of CIA infiltration of the White House and various government agencies.

Representative Lucien Nedzi (Dem-Mich.), chairman of the intelligence panel, made available a portion of a page from a 1973 internal CIA memorandum concerning questionable agency activities which apparently formed the basis for the claim of infiltration.

As read by Nedzi in a telephone interview, the May, 1973, document states that "for many years the CIA has detailed employees to the immediate office of the White House and to components intimately associated with the office of the President, such as the Council on International Economic Policy and the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. At present we have no clericals or professional assigned to the immediate White House office although we have one man detailed to their communications section.

Nedzi said the memo gave no indication of who in the White House was aware that these detailed employees were CIA officials.

Nedzi also said the memo stated that the secretary to former Commerce Secretary Peter Peterson was an agency employee. Nedzi added he learned independently of the memo that Peterson was aware of this.

The memo also outlined the presence of a total of six CIA employees at the Treasury Department, and one CIA officer at the Agency for International Development.

Senator Frank Church of the Senate committee, who has also read the memo, told reporters that "on the basis of that page we have no evidence that agents were planted in the White House." Church added that he planned to investigate Prouty's claim, including calling Butterfield as a witness.