

Widespread Electronic Snooping

NSA Chief Admits Agency

Washington

The National Security Agency secretly and possibly illegally scanned international telephone and cable traffic to intercept the messages of 1680 American citizens and groups and 5925 foreign nationals or organizations, its director told a Senate committee yesterday.

Lieutenant General Lew Allen Jr. told the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence that the seven-year program, on behalf of six government agencies, was halted in 1973. He said the NSA obtained no court orders to authorize the electronic surveillance nor had it received the specific approval of Presidents Johnson or Nixon or any attorney general.

"I am not the proper person to ask concerning the value of the product," Allen said. However, he added that "we are aware that a major terrorist act in the U.S. was prevented. In addition, some large drug shipments" were uncovered. Allen declined to give details in public session.

This was the first time a director of the NSA has described one of the agency's actual operations in public session. Under questioning, Allen agreed that his public testimony might be in technical violation of laws against disclosure of communications intelligence data.

His description disclosed that the operations were far more extensive than had been hinted in press accounts or in the report of the Rockefeller Commission on the Central Intelligence Agency.

Allen said the NSA supplied intelligence on Americans to the FBI, the CIA, the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, the secret Service and two Defense Department components, the Department of the Army and the Defense Intelligence Agency.

Senator Frank Church, chairman of the committee, described the watchlist operation as one of



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GENERAL LEW ALLEN
Agency had no court orders

two aspects of the NSA's activities that he regarded as "unlawful" and apparent violations of constitutional proscriptions against invasion of privacy.

He urged that the committee make public a report on another activity, described as "Operation Shamrock," which congressional sources later confirmed was the NSA's intrusion upon international cable traffic.

Senator John Tower (Rep-Tex.) the vice chairman, opposed disclosure of Operation Shamrock as he had opposed the public hearings held yesterday.

Tower and Senator Barry Goldwater (Rep-Ariz.) argued strongly that the disclosures "adversely affect the U.S. intelligence-gathering capability."

During a closed mid-afternoon meeting, the committee agreed, apparently without an actual vote, to submit the report on cable intrusion to Allen for his comment on whether it endangered sources and methods of intelligence before the committee votes on whether to make it public.

Even without the details of Operation Shamrock, the scope of Allen's testimony was unexpected. He said that as early as the first years of the 1960s, the NSA had occasionally looked at communications of Americans traveling to Cuba.

On Oct. 21, 1967, testimony and documents disclosed, the Army Department formally requested the NSA to help determine whether foreign governments were supporting domestic disturbances. The following June,

Spied

after Senator Robert Kennedy's assassination, the NSA followed federal law requiring agencies to help prevent assassinations by cooperating with the Secret Service.

The Secret Service submitted a watchlist of persons and groups that its officials believed posed a threat to its "protectees." Allen testified that the Secret Service also submitted the names of the "protectees."

To inform congressional staff members this apparently was taken as permission for the service to receive the overseas communications of candidates for president whom it protects.

In addition to threatening material, the NSA's computerized system presumably would select innocuous overseas messages about campaign activity.