

Hoover Resisted Nixon 'Spy' Plan

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — Sen. Stuart Symington implies that secret White House documents show J. Edgar Hoover resisted President Nixon's domestic intelligence plan as "unethical, illegal and unconstitutional."

Leonard Garment, the new presidential counsel, reiterated that the White House wants to prevent publication of the documents on national security grounds.

But Symington, who has copies in his possession, said yesterday it "would appear more a case of national embarrassment."

The documents relate to a supersecret 1970 plan to draw the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency into an expanded internal security network.

Nixon Approved

Nixon acknowledged in his Watergate statement Tuesday that he approved the plan, but said he revoked it five days later because Hoover, then the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, objected.

The New York Times said today that Hoover objected only because Nixon refused to give him written authorization for illegal wiretapping.

The plan included a program to spy on Black Panthers, antiwar radicals, Soviet espionage agents and potential Arab saboteurs, the Times said, in its story attributed to unnamed sources.

Nixon said Tuesday that the plan would have used breaking and entering as a means of gaining national security information.

The President maintained that the documents spelling out the plan are "extremely sensitive (and) of course must remain secret."

Secrecy Urged

And Garment declared again yesterday that the documents are not germane to the Watergate investigation and should not be made public.

But Symington has declared his intention of putting out a "sanitized"

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version of the plan and his staff lawyers are meeting with government security experts to start producing a releasable document.

Symington, acting chairman of the Armed Services Committee, which has jurisdiction over both the Pentagon and the CIA, posed these questions about the plan and other secret documents he has received from the CIA:

- Did Hoover oppose the plan because he felt it might be "unethical, illegal and unconstitutional?" (The CIA and the Pentagon are prohibited by law from taking part in internal security operations.)

- Why did Nixon direct his top aides to discuss the Watergate investigation with

Lt. Gen. Vernon Walters, deputy director of the CIA, rather than with Richard M. Helms, then the director?

- Why did former White House chief of staff H. R.

(Bob) Haldeman bypass Helms and tell Walters that it was the "President's wish" that he try to get the FBI to curtail its investigation?

- And why did John D. Erlichman, Nixon's former chief domestic adviser, go to Walters' predecessor, Gen. Robert E. Cushman, instead of to Helms, to solicit technical assistance that was used in the burglary of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist?

Nixon Proteges

Symington noted that both Walters and Cushman have been confidants and proteges of Nixon for 20 years. The Senator strongly defended Helms, who was dismissed by the President as CIA director shortly after the November election.

Walters is under heavy congressional pressure to resign because of an alleged effort to cover up Nixon's role in his original testimony to House and Senate subcommittees on the CIA.

Later, he submitted 11

memos prepared shortly after the Watergate break-in, including the one citing "The President's wish."

Members of Congress with access to top secret documents related to the case have been initially skeptical of Nixon's claim that national security considerations prompted him to restrict the FBI's investigation.

Congressional committees continued to examine the problem today in closed door hearings on alleged White House pressures to involve the CIA.

Nixon never even "made a quick phone call" to senior Central Intelligence Agency officials to determine whether the CIA was involved in the Watergate burglary, congressional investigators report.

"On the basis of my records, I'm not satisfied with the President's statement," said Chairman Lucien N. Nedzi (D-Mich.) of the House Armed Services Subcommittee.

MAY 24 1973