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Sources Say LBJ Checked Agnew Calls

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At the requests of former President Johnson, the FBI investigated Vice President Agnew's personal telephone calls during the 1968 campaign, Justice Department sources said yesterday.

The FBI "checked out" telephone calls Agnew made while campaigning in New Mexico in November, 1968, the sources said, to determine if he could be leaking information about secret Vietnam negotiations to a prominent Republican supporter, Anna Chennault.

Mrs. Chennault, the Chinese-born widow of the late Flying Tigers Gen. Claire Chennault, later was accused of trying to sabotage the 1968 Paris peace talks to help the candidacy of Richard M. Nixon.

The Senate Watergate committee is expected to receive today a memorandum from a former FBI official detailing the investigation of Agnew's telephone contacts.

One person who has seen the memorandum, which is being turned over to the committee by John W. Dean III, former presidential counsel, said it contains references to "electronic eavesdropping" on Agnew and Mrs. Chennault.

However, an FBI official said the investigation of Agnew did not include a wiretap.

The FBI source said President Johnson was convinced that Mrs. Chennault was obtaining classified information from Agnew relating to the secret October peace negotiations that led to the

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Oct. 31 bombing halt in North Vietnam.

The source said Mr. Johnson "got it in his head" that Agnew was the primary source of Mrs. Chennault's information.

In his book on the 1968 campaign, Theodore H. White said Mrs. Chennault had been in contact with the South Vietnamese government and President Johnson was aware of her activities against a peace agreement as a result of FBI wiretaps on her phone.

Two days after the announcement of the bombing halt, when 11 South Vietnamese senators voiced their support of Nixon and repudiated the peace negotiations, President Johnson complained bitterly about Mrs. Chennault to Mr. Nixon in a telephone call to Los Angeles, White said.

Mrs. Chennault has denied she was involved in a conspiracy to thwart the peace talks, claiming that she was being made a "scapegoat."

In her denial, she castigated "inaccurate political calculations in high places by those who presumably had all instrumentalities of intelligence at their disposal."

The FBI sources said President Johnson specifi-

cally asked if Agnew had contacted Mrs. Chennault by telephone on Nov. 11, 1968.

Agnew was on a campaign trip in Albuquerque, N.M., that day and, according to the sources, all of his telephone calls were "checked out," presumably from toll records.

The investigation revealed that Agnew made no calls to Mrs. Chennault's home that day, and President Johnson was so advised on Nov. 13, 1968, according to the FBI.

The FBI sources said the telephone checks were the only investigation made concerning Agnew.

The memorandum Dean is expected to give to the Watergate committee today reportedly was supplied by William C. Sullivan, who was forced by the late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to retire in 1971 after a series of policy disputes.

Dean has told the Watergate committee that when President Nixon learned the FBI had conducted political intelligence operations in the prior Democratic administration, he asked his chief counsel to obtain examples of those operations from Sullivan.

Sullivan reportedly sent Dean the memorandum about the Agnew investigation late last February or early in March.