

Legion Probed on White House Role

By Jack Anderson

The Watergate prosecutors have been investigating, of all people, the American Legion on suspicion that the White House used Legionnaires to stand up to left-wing demonstrators.

To the bewilderment of National Adjutant William Hauck, who has been a determinedly nonpartisan friend of Presidents since 1952, he was called in for interrogation by the prosecutors.

Hauck duly appeared before a stern, young lawyer named Nick Ackerman who, ironically, won the American Legion "Voice of Democracy" award at high school in 1965. Ackerman wanted to know whether the White House had tried to get the Legion to bus in members for the funeral of J. Edgar Hoover.

The prosecutors apparently thought the White House tried to recruit Legionnaires to square off with left-wing demonstrators at the funeral, thereby stirring up sentiment against President Nixon's enemies on the left. It's known that the Cuban Watergate burglary team was sent to squabble with the demonstrators.

The long-suffering Hauck was also interrogated about the Legion's history and its stand on the Pentagon Papers case. He was even questioned, astonishingly, about the White House tapes.

Hauck confided to us that he was "dumbfounded" at the questioning. Nevertheless, he patiently denied that the White House had contacted the Legion about the Hoover funeral or meddled in Legion policies.

He also checked with other top Legionnaires and wrote a private letter to Ackerman, stating they also had received no call "urging the influx of busloads of American Legionnaires to attend Mr. Hoover's funeral."

At the Watergate Special Prosecutor's office, a spokesman said it was "absolutely wrong" to say the Legion was under investigation. "We have asked many patriotic Americans to cooperate with us and regret very much that anyone would assume this meant we were investigating them," said the spokesman.

The spokesman's definition of investigation differs with the dictionary definition and the impression left on the Legion.

BATTLE FOR BURMA—Tough Chinese Communist guerrillas are attacking settlements in remote mountains of neutralist Burma.

As described by intelligence reports from the battle zone, the Chinese are led by officers in close touch with Peking.

Their thrusts into the hills and towns of northern Burma threaten not only Burma but Thailand, which has close mili-

tary ties with the U.S. There are no reports, however, that American special forces in Thailand have intervened in the spreading conflict.

The transcript of an unusual Morse radio transmission from the northern Shan states of Burma tells of powerful Communist action against Shan opium armies and troops of the "KMT (Taiwan)," a Chinese Koumintong force in Burma.

Relayed by Shan rebel army transmitters, the message says: "CPB (Communist Party, Burma) attacked KMT (Taiwan) in Mong Sang on Jan. 21, 1974, 0500 hours . . . 15 KMT killed and many wounded." The message claims many weapons were seized by the Communists.

A second message reports: "CPB occupied Mong Sang . . . Shan United Army (a rebel anti-Communist group) and KMT (Taiwan) retreated."

More clashes between the Communists and the Shan armies have been reported in the wireless transmissions of Hpa Heing, Chiang Lain, Om Tung, Kat Loi and Wan Ho Nar.

From other intelligence sources, we have learned that the Communists now threaten the Burmese district capital of Keng Tung and may control the only road connecting it with the rest of Burma.

Another message claims that the Chinese guerrillas probably hold "most of the area between

the Nam Pang river and the Salween area"—a huge tract of misty mountains and deep gorges in northern Burma.

Rep. Lester Wolff (D-N.Y.) chairman of the House International Narcotics Subcommittee, has established contacts with the Shan army to keep abreast of the opium trade. He has learned that the Chinese military moves may jeopardize his efforts to free two Russian doctors, who were kidnapped by Shan rebels from a Soviet mercy mission to Burma.

The Russians have secretly asked Wolff's help in getting the doctors back. To Wolff's astonishment, he was called from a sick bed to meet with a Soviet diplomat on the matter. Wolff promised to do what he could.

The congressman has used his contacts to seek the doctors' relief. The intermediaries, as a gesture, tried to smuggle two bottles of vodka to them via caravan routes into northern Burma. The vodka, Wolff has learned, was intercepted. But he has received unconfirmed reports that one of the doctors has now been sent southward in a jade caravan to freedom.

The other, as far as can be determined, remains in Shan rebel hands without his vodka. He is being held hostage as part of a bizarre scheme to get talks going on Shan independence from Burma.

© 1974, United Feature Syndicate, Inc.