

Insider's Story of Domestic Spy Plan

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The White House's 1970 domestic intelligence plan for illegal surveillance and surreptitious entry was aimed almost exclusively at the Black Panthers and the militant anti-war Weatherman, according to a principal architect of the plan.

Tom Charles Huston, the 32-year-old former presidential aide whose signature is on the still top-secret plan, said other militant groups were sources of concern, but he said that "we were not considering them in terms of extraordinary surveillance techniques."

Huston said the plan, which was approved by President Nixon in July 1970, did not include specific "widespread uses of illegal acts."

RESTRICTIONS

Rather, he said, it called for the lifting of restrictions against such techniques as illegal wiretaps, mail intercepts and breaking and entering so that a newly created domestic intelligence operating board could "evaluate each individual case on its own merits."

The opening of mail, Huston said, was explicitly limited to cases of suspected foreign espionage.

Moreover, Huston claimed, surveillance activity in the U.S. was to be limited to the FBI, except in cases of suspected conspiracies against military installations, in which case military counter-intelligence agencies were to be used.

LINKS

The plan called for the Central Intelligence Agency to investigate foreign links to U.S. militant groups. Huston said, The White House was also anxious for

New TV Coverage Of Hearings

The three major television networks will rotate their live coverage of the Senate Watergate hearings when the sessions resume this week.

Locally the hearings, which begin each day at 7 a.m., will be televised on KRON (Channel 4) tomorrow; KPIX (Channel 5) Wednesday; and KGO (Channel 7) Thursday.

The hearings will be repeated nightly at 8 p.m. on KQED (Channel 9).

Radio station KPFA-FM will also carry the hearings live.

The CIA to investigate reports that Arab terrorists planned attacks on Jews in this country, he said.

Huston outlined his version of the basic intent of the 1970 intelligence proposal in a two-hour interview in his law office here.

The plan was scuttled by Mr. Nixon on July 28, 1970—five days after it took effect—because of the strenuous objections of the late FBI director J. Edgar Hoover.

Huston said the "key element" in the proposal was the creation of a domestic intelligence operating board, which was to have consisted of representatives from the White House, the FBI, the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency and the three military counter-intelligence agencies. It was to have been structured exactly like the U.S. intelligence board, which oversees

foreign intelligence operations.

However, it was this element that Hoover objected to most strenuously—an objection that prevailed over the President's wishes, Huston said.

"Hoover didn't want anybody, Helms or anybody else, sitting on a board and a mission to reverse himself on the creation of the intelligence board, Huston said.

One of these was the creation of an intelligence evaluation of the way J. Edgar Hoover ran the FBI," said Huston. Richard M. Helms was director of the CIA then.

There were several offshoots of Mr. Nixon's decision committee in the Justice Department, which the President said in his 4000-word May 22 Watergate statement is "under investigation."

DOWNFALL

Another offshoot, Huston said, was his own fall from grace in the eyes of Hoover. Huston said he lobbied vigorously on behalf of the proposed board even after Mr. Nixon abandoned the plan, and that he "suddenly was persona non grata with Hoover."

Huston said that five days after Mr. Nixon's decision he "hassled" with White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman "about whether the President should let Hoover get away with it."

Later, Huston was told that presidential counsel John W. Dean III was taking over his domestic security duties.

Seven months later, Huston said, he decided to quit his White House job. He left Washington in April 1971.

WATERGATE

But the most important fallout from the abandonment of the intelligence plan, Huston feels, was the Watergate scandal itself.

"There never would have been a Watergate if the



TOM HUSTON
He helped draw it up

President hadn't reversed himself," said Huston.

Because Mr. Nixon yielded to Hoover, he was forced to turn to the creation of a special White House intelligence group which came to be known as "the plumbers," which Huston conchoc vigilante group of clowns."

The plumbers, headed by White House aides John D. Ehrlichman and Egil Krogh, subsequently engineered the burglary of the Beverly Hills office of the psychiatrist for Pentagon Papers defendant Daniel Ellsberg.

Had the proposed intelligence board been in control of all domestic security operations, Huston said, "professionals with a high degree of integrity" would have curtailed any political abuses.

NIXON

Referring to the President, Huston said, "he felt that certain things had to be done . . . so he set up his own White House unit." He added, "there's no way you can keep a group like that in line."

He repeatedly stressed in the interview that it is important to understand the political climate in the nation in 1970, when anti-war fervor triggered hundreds of bombings, attacks on policemen, official shootings at Kent State and Jackson State universities and other acts of violence.

"It's easy for people to sit around today and say, 'How in the hell could these guys (at the White House) do it? What were they thinking about?'"