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Ford Sees Colby on CIA Report

Associated Press

President Ford met with Central Intelligence Agency director William C. Colby yesterday to review published allegations that the agency conducted illegal spy operations in the United States.

Earlier, Mr. Ford discussed the alleged domestic surveillance with Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger, but a White House spokesman refused to say what, if any action would be taken.

The President "wants to pursue the subject further," press secretary Ron Nessen told reporters, adding that Mr. Ford would have something to say about the matter by the middle of next week.

Last week, Colby sent Mr. Ford a 50-page report which administration sources have said largely substantiates a report by The New York Times that CIA agents spied on anti-war activists and dissidents during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The alleged spying operation, said to have included files on 10,000 Americans, reportedly was discovered by Schlesinger during his brief tenure as head of the CIA in 1973. Schlesinger's predecessor, Richard Helms, has denied that any illegal domestic operation took place during his seven years as director.

Helms, now ambassador to Iran, was reliably reported to have returned to Washington, and Kissinger said he planned to confer with him today. Nessen said he knew of no plans for a meeting between Helms and Mr. Ford.

Kissinger, who also heads the National Security Council, has disclaimed any knowledge of illegal activities by the CIA. Rep. Lucien N. Nedzi (D-Mich.), chairman of a House subcommittee which oversees CIA activities, has said that the council "probably" would have been aware of any domestic operations.

Four top officials in the counterintelligence unit described as controlling the alleged domestic spying have left the agency. The CIA has declined to discuss the departures, saying only that the four were taking advantage of retirement benefits available to employees who left government service before the end of the year.