

CIA Probe Opens

--'Few Misdeeds'

Washington

Former CIA Director James R. Schlesinger told an investigating panel yesterday that "a small number of misdemeanors" had been committed by the agency.

Schlesinger, who headed the Central Intelligence Agency for six months in 1973, made the comment to newsmen as he left a closed session with the committee appointed by President Ford to investigate allegations the CIA had engaged in illegal domestic spying.

Later, at a briefing, Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller, chairman of the eight-member panel, was asked about the Schlesinger comment and replied that

"he made exactly that statement" to the commission.

Rockefeller said that Schlesinger did not elaborate but that "all of the information he referred to is going to be made available to the commission in detail."

The commission also heard from CIA Director William E. Colby and former director Richard Helms.

Asked if any of the three had confirmed the allegations, Rockefeller replied, "I don't think the commission is going to try to jump to any conclusions."

He refused to answer any questions about specific items that may have been discussed.

Asked if he is prepared to invite present and past CIA employees to come forward with information, Rockefeller replied, "To go out with a dragnet at this point, I don't think we're capable of coping with it."

However, within an hour after Rockefeller ended his news conference, his staff issued a one-paragraph statement which said he had taken up the question with other commission members.

"The commission response was that it would

Back Page Col. 1

From Page 1

welcome any specific, factual information from individuals, especially former or present members of the CIA, relating to domestic activities of the CIA."

Rockefeller repeatedly emphasized that the goal of the commission is "to restore the confidence of the American people in government."

Asked if he would request congressional authorization for subpoena power, the vice president said, "We'll ask for it if we need it."

He added that other former CIA directors and Colby had pledged their full cooperation.

The commission is to meet again next Monday.

David W. Belin, a 46-year-old Iowa lawyer, has been named staff director for the panel.

Schlesinger became head of the CIA while the agency was under fire for its role in the Watergate scandal, and he told reporters, "There were a number of issues that came as a result of the review of intelligence activities at the agency which was precipitated by the Watergate episode... In the course of that review certain things did come to light."

He declined to describe them in more detail but said they covered the entire history of the agency, a period of 20 years, and "the number of misdemeanors in that period was, I think, quite small."

The Rockefeller panel session was the opening round in the investigations touched off by allegations that, in violation of its congressional mandate, the CIA spied on

domestic anti-war groups during the Vietnam conflict and maintained files on thousands of Americans.

Two Senate committees plan to begin hearings later this week.

And in the House, the majority Democrats met in caucus yesterday to discuss a proposal to create a special committee to investigate the CIA.

Mr. Ford named the panel on January 5 and directed its members to report their findings in 90 days.

In his opening statement, Rockefeller said the commission would "determine if the CIA has exceeded its statutory authority through activities conducted in the United States..."

"The President has directed the commission to determine whether or not present safeguards are adequate to preclude unauthorized CIA activity; and, if not, to recommend needed changes."

Colby, a career CIA employee, was named by former President Nixon to head the agency in July, 1973. He succeeded Schlesinger who left to become secretary of defense.

Schlesinger headed the CIA for only six months but according to published reports he was the one who uncovered domestic operations carried on by CIA counterintelligence agents.

The alleged domestic activities took place while Helms was head of the agency from 1966 until early 1973.

Helms is currently U.S. ambassador to Iran.

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