

4 Ex-Aides Knew of No Johnson Order To Set Up Domestic Office Within C.I.A.

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 17 — Four former high-ranking members of the Johnson Administration said today that they knew of no Presidential directive ordering the Central Intelligence Agency to set up a special office in 1967 to handle domestic intelligence about radical and antiwar groups.

In testimony before a Senate subcommittee yesterday, Richard Helms, former Director of Central Intelligence, said that the agency had set up a special office to monitor domestic antiwar activities "in response to the express concern of the President."

Mr. Helms, who is now the Ambassador to Iran, did not specify which President had expressed the concern or when the office was established. On Wednesday, however, William E. Colby, the present C.I.A. director, told another Senate subcommittee that Mr. Helms had authorized the special office on Aug. 15, 1967, at a time when questions were "raised as to whether foreign stipulation or support was being provided to this dissident activity." Lyndon B. Johnson was President at that time.

Deny Johnson Role

The four Johnson Administration officials—Dean Rusk, former Secretary of State; Walt W. Rostow, former national security adviser; Joseph A. Califano Jr., former special assistant, and James R. Jones, former appointments secretary—took exception to any suggestion that the C.I.A.'s domestic operations were initiated because of concern voiced by President Johnson.

The four Johnson aides commented in telephone interviews. "I was stunned, I was really stunned when I read the story" about Mr. Helms's testimony, said Mr. Califano, who was directly involved in the White House response to the civil rights riots and other disturbances in the nineteen-sixties. "I had to ask myself after reading it—were there two White Houses in 1967?"

The former aide said he had "no knowledge" of any Presidential directive authorizing the C.I.A. to begin collecting domestic intelligence. He said he had heard, President Johnson express suspicions about foreign involvement in the antiwar and other protests. "But every time I asked somebody for specifics about it, there turned out to be nothing there."

Never Heard

Mr. Jones, now a Democratic Representative from Oklahoma who served in the Presidential appointments office from 1965 to 1969, also recalled hearing



Dean Rusk



Walt W. Rostow

Mr. Johnson mention his suspicions about the origins of the antiwar movement.

"I don't know how well you knew President Johnson," he added, "but he said a lot of things on a lot of subjects."

"I never heard him give any kind of order, direction or receive any kind of direct report from the C.I.A." about domestic activities, Mr. Jones said. While working in the appointments office, he said, he monitored all requests of Federal agencies to and from the President.

Mr. Rusk, now a professor at the University of Georgia, said, "I must confess that I never heard of an internal security section of the C.I.A. and when the head of it resigned, I'd never heard of him."

The former Secretary of State was referring to James J. Angleton, the former director of the C.I.A.'s Counterintelligence Division who resigned one day after the first published reports about the agency's domestic activities.

22 Agents Reported

In his testimony Wednesday,

Mr. Colby acknowledged that the special office set up by Mr. Angleton and Mr. Helms had placed at least 22 undercover agents in the antiwar movement as part of a domestic counterintelligence effort that resulted in the accumulation of files on 10,000 Americans.

Mr. Rusk did recall, however, that the Johnson Administration had developed some "hard evidence" that foreign governments were involved in supporting the antiwar efforts in the United States. He did not elaborate. The Administration decided not to make its information available, Mr. Rusk said, because "we didn't want to smear all the others who were legitimately against the war."

Mr. Rostow, now a professor at the University of Texas, said he had "no memory" of any presidential order calling on the C.I.A. to begin domestic antiwar operations, "and I suspect I would have."

Another high-ranking Johnson

Administration official, who did not wish to be quoted, said that the C.I.A. and other intelligence agencies had been asked by the White House to make assessments of domestic unrest following student disturbances in the United States, France, Britain, Japan and West Germany in the late nineteen-sixties.

Jurisdiction Issue

Such assignments were carefully made, he said, because of White House awareness of the "delicacy" of the jurisdictional boundaries between the C.I.A. and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The F.B.I. has sole responsibility for counterintelligence activities in the United States under the 1947 National Security Act.

"I recall that the reports showed that the Communists were very slow to get into the student uprising in Paris," the former official said. The reports also showed, he said, that students, in the United States and elsewhere were expressing great "concern over such things as humanizing bureaucracies and the like. "It was less political," the source said of the dissent, than some Administration officials had suspected.

Mr. Helms, who has strongly denied any wrongdoing in connection with the C.I.A. domestic operations, is scheduled to testify Wednesday before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He will be questioned then, Senate sources said today, about seemingly contradictory testimony about such operations that he gave during confirmation hearings on his ambassadorial appointment in 1973.