

Panel on Intelligence Asks Records of Five Presidents

NYTimes

MAR 15 1975

Senatorial Request to Ford Covering All Authorizations of Activities Is One of Most Sweeping Made by Congress

By NICHOLAS M. HORROCK

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 14—The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence has asked President Ford for records of virtually every White House authorization of foreign and domestic intelligence activities dating back nearly three decades and covering the terms of five Presidents.

It is undoubtedly one of the most sweeping Congressional requests for secret intelligence ever made. Several members of the committee said they privately viewed the request as the test for President Ford's willingness to cooperate with the Senate investigation.

The request, set out in an addendum to a letter delivered to the White House Wednesday, was made public today by the White House with the permission of Senator Frank Church,

chairman of the committee.

The Idaho Democrat had made public the first item of the request, a call for the 39-page report furnished to President Ford by William E. Colby, Director of Central Intelligence, at a news Conference Wednesday. But the more sweeping items were not disclosed until today.

In his letter accompanying the request, Senator Church said the items were needed "to fully determine the legal basis for the activities of the United States intelligence agencies." He said the request had been made with the "unanimous approval of the committee."

The committee divided its request into three areas and

Continued on Page 10, Column 3

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

its spokesmen have declined to comment on the meaning of any portion of it. A White House spokesman said the request has been turned over to Philip W. Buchen, counsel to the President, for his review.

The committee wants the following:

All executive orders, national security decision memoranda (NSDMSD) or intelligence directives (NCIDS), and other White House directives pertaining to the charter, structure or guidelines for any overt or covert foreign or domestic intelligence agencies or activities.

"There is no time period on this section, and the committee apparently wants data from 1946 or 1947 to the present.

According to one former top Administration aide familiar with intelligence activities, this could be a large volume of material if the committee wants to include the working papers that were involved in the final orders and authorizations.

The committee also asked for "all executive orders, National Security Council memoranda and directives, and other White House instructions per-

taining to the structure, functions or organization of intelligence policy organizations within the office of the President, including the Forty Committee and the Washington Special Action Group (and their predecessor organizations, e.g., the Operations Coordinating Board, Special Group, 54/12 Group, 303 Committee, etc.)."

Core of U. S. Secrecy

In this request, the committee is delving into what has clearly been the very core of secrecy in the United States Government. From 1948 until the present, the White House has maintained a deeply shrouded group of policy-makers who have passed on every major aspect of intelligence activity.

At present, the top level intelligence policy-making is controlled by the Forty Committee, which has day-to-day responsibilities, and the Washington Special Action Group—a creation of Secretary of State Kissinger—which handles major crisis situations. Mr. Kissinger is chairman of both committees as Secretary of State and as the President's national security adviser.

Very little is known about the Forty Committee's operations, but Capitol Hill hearings over the last several years have disclosed, for instance, that the Forty Committee had approved the covert payment of \$350,000 to members of the Chilean Congress in an attempt to block the election of President Allende.

One key question on such entities as the Forty Committee is whether they have any legal standing or are simply internal review boards to help the President make decisions on intelligence operations. Indeed, critics have long questioned whether they simply exist to permit the President to disavow a covert operation that goes astray.

The committee also wants

staff organization charts and the names of the men who have staffed these secret groups over the last 28 years, presumably to be able to interview present and former officials of specific operations.

Until very recently the names of men involved in Forty Committee activities were top secret. At one Congressional hearing, Mr. Colby was reluctant to testify in public that Mr. Kissinger was the chairman.

It is unclear whether all the materials and documents sought by the Church committee are in the White House.

Sources familiar with handling of top security data said that much material engendered by the National Security Council might be at the White House, but other executive orders and authorizations might conceivably have been shifted to the National Archives or to the Presidential libraries of past Presidents.

To several members of the Senate committee, President Ford's response to this, the committee's first major request, is as one source put "the testing grounds" for whether the Administration "wants a full, careful investigation."