

WHITE HOUSE LAG ON SPY DATA SEEN

Administration Accused by
Senators of Hampering
Intelligence Inquiry
NYTimes APR 24 1975

By NICHOLAS M. HORROCK
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 23—

The chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence charged today that "excessive delays" in turning over documents by the Ford Administration and the Central Intelligence Agency were hampering the committee's investigation.

It was the strongest complaint to date by Senator Frank Church, the committee chairman, and came only a week after Mr. Church had indicated there was an atmosphere of cooperation. The Idaho Democrat said that the committee felt there were "excessive delays by the executive branch in response to our requests for documents and materials."

He warned that the "pace" of the Senate committee's investigation "should not be set by the executive agencies" and "there was no further excuse for the slow pace." He said that he and Senator John G. Tower, Republican of Texas, who is vice chairman of the committee, had asked for a meeting with senior White House aides to discuss the problem. He said that the committee ordered its staff to proceed with the field investigation and interrogation of officials without waiting for the documents.

Roderick Hills, counsel to the President and the man who is coordinating relations with the committee, expressed dismay at the Senator's strong statement. He said the White House staff had done everything to cooperate with the committee. "We broke our backs getting some of this material out . . . there were A.M. several nights," he said.

War Blamed for Delay

Mr. Hills said that the processing had been hampered by the "events in Southeast Asia" last week but that an enormous amount of material had been handed over to the committee in the last few days.

He said the volume of material was also an important factor. "They wanted one set of 34 books of documents that came to your waist when it was stacked on the floor," Mr. Hills said. He also said that the White House "could not responsibly turn this material over without reading it."

The Senate committee has sent major requests for information to the Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Defense Intelligence Agency, but today's complaint appeared mainly aimed at the C.I.A. Mr. Church said the committee had "thing" from the agency.

Mr. Hills said that he could not understand this complaint. "The C.I.A. hasn't held up anything," he said.

Several sources familiar with activities behind the committee's closed doors said that its members appeared to "feet" but that there was disagreement as to the cause. One group of Senators contended, these sources said, that the Administration was intentionally trying to impede the investigation. But others felt the delays were the result of "bureaucracy." One member predicted that "in the next 10 days to two weeks it would be possible to tell whether President Ford planned to resist the Congressional investigations or cooperate fully.

First Signs of a Breach

These were the first signs of a breach within the committee ranks.

Mr. Tower, who accompanied Mr. Church at today's briefing for reporters, said that he concurred fully with Mr. Church's statements, but he stressed that he saw no concerted attempt to impede the investigation.

Mr. Church said that the committee would ask for basic documents on intelligence matters from the State Department, the Department of Justice, the National Postal Service and the Securities and Exchange Commission. The mentioning of the last agency immediately raised questions among Capitol Hill observers because the commission has no known foreign intelligence gathering function or national security role.

By and large, as Mr. Church has described them, the committee's requests for documents have been to establish the legal basis for intelligence operations by the various agencies and the Presidential authorizations for specific covert activities.

Postmaster Wrote Colby

WASHINGTON, April 23 (UPI)—Benjamin F. Bailar, the Postmaster General, told a Senate Appropriations subcommittee today that he had written a letter of complaint to William E. Colby, Director of Central Intelligence, after reading in the newspapers that the C.I.A. had opened people's mail. He said Mr. Colby had replied that the practice had been stopped and would not resume.