

Levi Clarifies Stand On CIA Prosecution

Associated Press

Attorney General Edward H. Levi says that he, and not President Ford, will decide whether to bring criminal charges against CIA personnel involved in assassination plots or domestic wrongdoing.

"The Attorney General has made clear to the President that he (Levi) will retain any prosecutorial discretion," Justice Department spokesman Robert Feldkamp said yesterday. "They did discuss this and Ford had no problem with it."

Feldkamp was questioned about an apparent conflict between the position Levi outlined to a group of reporters last Wednesday and Mr. Ford's remarks in a Washington Post interview on Monday. ~~30 July~~

Levi said last week, "I would feel obligated to tell the President to communicate the position of the department, but I would not expect the President to tell the department what to do."

The Washington Post quoted

the President as saying Monday that he would "expect to be informed" by Levi prior to any prosecution of government officials for past CIA activities and "would certainly want to discuss the pros and cons" of any criminal charges.

Levi read The Post account and then "said there is plenty of room for the two statements to coexist," Feldkamp related. "The President certainly would be notified routinely if any prosecution the department would initiate would deal with national security or foreign policy."

But he added that Levi told the President in a meeting two weeks ago that "the decision had to be made here." Levi would not seek the President's permission to proceed with criminal charges, Feldkamp said.

Levi was not available. He and his family left yesterday for a week-long vacation in Wisconsin.