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Butterfield Says Prouty CIA Charge Has Caused 'Irreparable Damage'

United Press International
Alexander Butterfield, accused of being a Central Intelligence Agency contact inside the White House, said yesterday the allegation had done irreparable damage to him because it was "tantamount to a charge of perjury."

In a weekend television interview, Butterfield said, "If I was their contact man, I was a hell of a poor one, because I had no contact whatsoever with the CIA."

Butterfield took the offensive yesterday against retired Air Force Col. L. Fletcher Prouty, the former Pentagon intelligence officer who said

last week that convicted Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt told him in 1971 that Butterfield was a White House contact for the CIA.

Butterfield telephoned a statement to United Press International yesterday saying "Those serious allegations are wholly false and defamatory. In that I stated my White House duties in full under oath to the Senate Watergate committee and other high-level investigative bodies, Fletcher Prouty's allegation is tantamount to a charge of perjury and the damage has been done. In my opinion, it is irreparable."

"Prouty's initial public statements about me were sufficient to lead reporters to allege in my case a spy motive, to allege infiltration, in other words to suggest that while at

the White House I served two masters."

During an interview Sunday on "60 Minutes" (CBS, WTOP), Butterfield said of Prouty's statement: "I think that is irresponsible. I think it is false . . . I am upset by that."

Butterfield, who headed the Federal Aviation Administration until he resigned in March, said he had never met or seen Hunt and had never heard of Prouty until recently.

Prouty, reacted by telephone, repeated the account yesterday that he gave reporters Friday. He added he saw nothing defamatory in asserting that Butterfield was a "contact" official. "Calling a man a contact without going any further is not defamatory," he said. "I was one for nine years and I was proud of it."