

Nixon, Johnson Linked To 'Eavesdrop Gossip'

SF Chronicle OCT 13 1975

Targets of Spy Agency

By Bob Woodward
Washington Post

Washington

The National Security Agency intercepted conversations of Jane Fonda, Dr. Benjamin Spock and other leading anti-war figures in 1969 and 1970, according to informed intelligence community sources.

The communications were intercepted by the agency from overseas cable traffic, some domestic telegrams and long-distance telephone calls. Transcripts then were circulated to top government officials under one of the nation's most highly classified and closely held code designations, the sources said.

At least 150 messages of conversations and communications of anti-war leaders were routed to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other officials under a special intelligence designation in the "Gamma" series for sensitive communications intercepts, the sources said.

Special officers in the CIA, FBI and the counter-intelligence unit of the Defense Intelligence Agency were designated to receive and handle these messages, according to the sources.

The sources revealed the exact code designation in the Gamma series used for the intercepts of the communications of anti-war figures, but an intelligence official suggested last week that it would be imprudent to make it public.

The National Security Agency used a similar designation in the Gamma series — the designation "gamma Gupy" — for the communications it monitored from the limousine radio calls of Soviet Union officials in Moscow. This project was first reported in the newspapers in 1971.

The Gamma designations were reserved exclusively for

Back Page Col. 1

From Page 1

eavesdropping on the communications of those governments and their embassies in Washington.

"If the Egyptian foreign ministry had a meeting with an American businessman, and then informed its Washington embassy on what was said," this source said, "the NSA would pick up the content from that communication."

But other sources said NSA ability to gather information on the movement of prominent American business and professional leaders abroad can be far more direct. NSA monitors virtually all foreign cable traffic and many businesses send enormous amounts of top-level information by cable, these sources said.

NSA is also known to monitor telephone calls between various foreign countries and eavesdrop

on Americans in those calls.

According to sources familiar with the reports, the reports were received in the White House situation room which is where top secret intelligence reports normally come in. Unlike NSA usual intelligence "products," however, these reports had not been passed through the Director of Central Intelligence and were not part of intelligence evaluations that come to the President from the intelligence community each day.

Two sources said they believed NSA supplied the material in order to "curry favor" with the Presidents and compared it with a practice of the late director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover. Hoover, authoritative intelligence sources said in earlier press accounts, sent gossip tidbits to the President through private briefings by top FBI aides.

Meanwhile, sources familiar with the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence investigation of political assassination plots, said a former CIA biochemist, Sidney Gottlieb, confirmed allegations that the CIA had planned to kill the late Patrice Lumumba, a leader in Zaire's former Democratic Republic of Congo.

Gottlieb's account, given in closed session, conformed to earlier reports in the New York Times, these sources said. The CIA prepared a feasibility plan in 1961 to kill Lumumba and Gottlieb's technical services division prepared a poison that made the victim appear to be dying of a common tropical disease, Gottlieb was said to have testified.

The poison was shipped to Africa, but the plan was never put into effect, Gottlieb reportedly testified. Lumumba died nearly a year later in an apparently unrelated incident.

New York Times