

C.I.A. AID REPORTS EVOKE FORD ANGER

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President Said to Suspect
Congress Members Told
of Activities in Italy

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 7 —

President Ford was described today as "angry" about published reports that the Central Intelligence Agency had begun funneling money to anti-Communist politicians in Italy.

Ron Nessen, the White House press secretary, said that there was "strong suspicion in the White House" that what he termed the "allegations" about C.I.A. had first been relayed to reporters by members of Congress who had received classified briefings on C.I.A. operations.

Speaking to reporters, Mr. Nessen added that President Ford believed that "the mere publication of allegations, whether true or false," damaged foreign policy.

Such reports, he said, "undermine our capability to carry out our foreign policy and make it difficult to work with and continue to have a relationship with friends and allies around the world."

Publication of such stories, Mr. Nessen said, raises questions in the White House "about how to responsibly deal with Congressional interest in playing an increased role in foreign policy and intelligence policy."

Other White House officials confirmed later that the C.I.A. had been authorized last month by President Ford to provide \$6 million in secret subsidies in Italy in an effort to prevent further Communist gains in national and local elections.

Separate subcommittees of the House and Senate were briefed about the covert spending last month after President Ford had approved the C.I.A. program.

The practice of giving such secret briefings began a year ago, shortly after Congress approved an amendment to the 1974 Foreign Assistance Act calling for the C.I.A. to report all clandestine overseas political operations "in a timely fashion" to the "appropriate committees of the Congress."

The amendment, which was proposed by Representative Leo J. Ryan, a second-term Democrat from California, specifically called upon the C.I.A. to give briefings to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House International Relations Committee, thus seeming to provide those committees with their first official jurisdiction over the agency's activities.

First Briefing Year Ago

The first such briefings came last January and dealt, at least in part, with the C.I.A.'s initial undertaking in what was to be a major effort to prevent the Popular Movement for the liberation of Angola from controlling the Government when Angola gained independence.

In recent weeks, as the public debate over the C.I.A.'s secret operations intensified—with an inevitable increase in the amount of confidential material that was published in newspapers—a number of legislators have complained that the increased knowledge about C.I.A. activities has not increased Congressional authority.

"The passage of my amendment was supposed to open things up," Mr. Ryan said in a telephone interview today. "Somehow the assumption was that if the C.I.A. has to tell more people, things will change. Well, it didn't."

"What we don't have," added Mr. Ryan, who is a member of the oversight committee that was briefed about Italy last on Dec. 9, "is some form of approval and disapproval."

He said that he was disturbed by the fact that he and his colleagues learned of the C.I.A. programs only after they had been formally approved by the President and put into effect.

Washington sources said that the New York Times erred in reporting today that John A. Volpe, Ambassador to Italy, had objected to the C.I.A. program of covert financial aid to anti-Communist Italian politicians. Mr. Volpe was actually among high-level officials who urged such action, the sources said.