

CIA (D)

FORD NAMES BUSH TO LEAD PANEL TO DIRECT INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES; ROBERT MURPHY HEADS OVERSEERS

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Associated Press The New York Times
George Bush, left, chairman of new intelligence committee, and Robert D. Murphy, who will be a member of three-man oversight board announced by President Ford.

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GUIDELINES DUE

President Says He Will Issue 'Charters' to Secret Agencies

NYTimes

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 17— President Ford announced tonight the most sweeping reform and reorganization of the United States intelligence agencies since 1947.

His proposals included strong new powers for the Director of Central Intelligence, apparatus for improved oversight by the executive branch and curtailment of covert operations abroad.

In a two-page statement read at the opening of a news conference, Mr. Ford said that he was appointing a new committee, with George Bush, Director of Central Intelligence as chairman, to conduct the "manage-

Transcript of news conference will be found on Page 20.

ment of intelligence." It was expected to have the power to prepare the budget for intelligence agencies and to allocate their resources, White House sources said.

Mr. Ford said he was creating a three-man "independent oversight board" to "monitor the performance of our intelligence operations." He said the members would be Robert D. Murphy, former Under Secretary of State, who recently directed a study of the country's intelligence systems, chairman; Stephen Ailes, Secretary of the Army in the Johnson Administration, and Leo Cherne, a publisher of business books and leader of private movements, to help rescue persons from totalitarian nations.

Mr. Ford said he was also centralizing "overall policy directions for intelligence" in the National Security Council, which consists of the President, Vice President, and the Secretaries of State and Defense.

The action amounted to a strengthening of the chain of command created by the National Security Act of 1947.

Mr. Ford explained under questioning that the "40 Committee," which has been a section of the National Security Council that for a decade controlled covert operations, would be renamed and reorganized.

Mr. Ford said that "to improve the performance of the intelligence agencies and to restore public confidence in them" he was issuing a "comprehensive set of public guidelines which will serve as legally binding charters would provide "stringent protections for the rights of American citizens."

Mr. Ford's creation of an intelligence committee and an oversight board and his charters for the various agencies do not require legislation, White House sources said.

As he noted, he will seek a law to firm up protection

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against the leaking of government secrets.

Mr. Ford, in his statement, did not give the details of the charters, but earlier White House sources said they would include strong proscription against domestic surveillance operations by the C.I.A., limitations on covert operations abroad and regulations to prohibit violations of civil rights by any Federal intelligence gathering agency.

Goes to Congress Today

He said that tomorrow he planned to send to Congress "special legislation to safeguard critical intelligence secrets."

"This legislation would make it a crime for a Government employee who has access to certain highly classified information to reveal that information improperly." Mr. Ford did not make clear in the statement whether this would cover former employees with secret knowledge, but earlier White House aides said that it would.

Mr. Ford's statement tonight was the "bare bones" of a wide range of orders and administrative actions, some public, and some private that will take place shortly, one key White House source said. The White House is expected to conduct a detailed briefing for the news media on the President's program tomorrow.

Mr. Ford's statement carried the tone of strong support for the C.I.A. and the other intelligence agencies and began with sharp criticism of leaks of information.

"For over a year, the nation has engaged in exhaustive investigations into the activity of the C.I.A. and other intelligence units, facts, hearsay and closely-held secrets—all have been spread out on the public record," he said.

Mr. Ford again voiced his concern over the abuses that the investigations of the intelligence community have disclosed, but again pledged that "I will not be a party to the dismantling of the C.I.A. and the other intelligence agencies."

He said that "to operate without adequate and timely intelligence information will cripple our security in a world that is hostile to our freedoms."

Rebuilding Confidence

He called the intelligence apparatus, like the military, a "central pillar" of national strength.

"The overriding task now is to rebuild the confidence and capability of our intelligence services so that we can live securely in peace and free-

dom," he said.

Mr. Ford went before news reporters with his plan some two hours after briefing Congressional leaders. He said that he would meet with Congressional leaders again to map out legislation to "provide judicial safeguards against electronic surveillance and mail openings." He said he would also support legislation making it a crime to plot the assassination of foreign leaders.

From the standpoint of protecting against abuses by intelligence agencies, Mr. Ford's most important step may be the setting up of the oversight board. As it is conceived of by Administration officials it would have the power to monitor all intelligence activities and would receive reports directly from the inspector generals of the various agencies. If it saw a particular abuse, these sources said, it could recommend disciplinary action or prosecution to the Attorney General.

From a management point of view, Mr. Ford tonight centralized more power in the hands of the Director of Central Intelligence than any had since the creation of the C.I.A.

The director has always been the nominal head of the intelligence community, but in fact has had little power over the other agencies, particularly the Department of Defense.

Mr. Bush will head a three-man committee that will include William Hyland, of the National Security Council, and Robert Ellsworth, an assistant Secretary of Defense for Intelligence. The group will formulate the budget for the intelligence community and allocate its resources.

If a disagreement occurs, these sources said, it would be "appealed" to the National Security Council and ultimately to the President. Mr. Bush, these sources said, will not be a "czar" of intelligence and will have to "negotiate" his differences with member agencies.

Led to Rockefeller Panel

President Ford's proposals for reforming and reorganizing the intelligence agencies came nearly 14 months after an article in The New York Times quoted intelligence sources as saying that the C.I.A. had violated its charter by conducting domestic surveillance.

Early last year Mr. Ford appointed a special commission headed by Vice President Rockefeller to investigate possible abuses by the agency. As the investigation was getting started the news media revealed that the C.I.A. might have been involved in plots to kill foreign leaders, Mr. Ford then enlarged the Rockefeller commission's mandate to include this question.

At the same time, the Senate and the House of Representatives authorized the formation of select committees to investigate all the intelligence agen-

cies. The breadth of the Congressional investigations largely eclipsed the role of the Rockefeller commission.

The commission issued a report last June confirming many charges of abuse against the C.I.A.

Mr. Ford, however, ordered the commission to turn over its material on assassination plots to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, which reported last fall that it found evidence that the United States had been involved in plans to kill several foreign leaders.

Narrower Issues Reported

The Rockefeller commission's recommendations were written on the relatively narrow question of abuses by the C.I.A. It was clear from the beginning that the House and Senate would propose more sweeping changes dealing with foreign intelligence, covert action and international electronic snooping and would attempt, indirectly, to restrict Presidential power in this area.

Congress is also expected to vote for stronger oversight to take the form of a joint committee or two new oversight committees.

From early summer on, Mr. Ford and his senior advisers have wrestled with the question of whether the President should move within his power sphere—that is, by executive order and administrative change—to make his own broad changes in the operations of intelligence agencies in this country.

Some of Mr. Ford's advisers felt he should let Congress take the lead in proposing controls and reforms. But last fall, according to White House sources, Mr. Ford decided to prepare his own set of changes; to make what aides called the "most fundamental shifts in the operation of the intelligence community since the 1947 National Security Act."

The plans announced by Mr. Ford today and the legislative proposals that will be sent to Capitol Hill tomorrow are the result of five months of study by an intelligence coordinating group headed by John O. Marsh Jr., a counselor to the President.

The group included Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State; James R. Schlesinger Jr., former Secretary of Defense, and Donald M. Rumsfeld, his successor; William E. Colby, former director of Central Intelligence, and George Bush, his successor; Lieut. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, Mr. Ford's assistant for national security affairs; Edward H. Levi, the Attorney

General; Philip W. Buchen, Mr. Ford's legal counsel, and James T. Lynn, director of the Office of Management and Budget.

As the intelligence group completed its work a new question was posed within White House circles: Should Mr. Ford's plan be announced before both Congressional committees had reported or after?

Many in the administration concluded, in January, that the Capitol Hill investigations had lost their momentum over such issues as leakage of national security data and that the President would be best served by making his own announcement on his own terms. That is what he did today.

Late last week the leadership on Capitol Hill was alerted that the President might have proposals ready by mid-week or late this week. The White House staff worked through the weekend trying to iron out subtle but important arguments over some aspects of the plan.

The final set of proposals was hammered out yesterday by 18 key advisers at sessions attended by the military and intelligence agency representatives.