

New Guidelines

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Bush Says CIA Can Still Bribe Officials

Washington

CIA Director George Bush acknowledged yesterday that President Ford's new intelligence program leaves the door open for covert activities that could include bribery of foreign officials to influence a nation's political system.

Bush implied he saw nothing wrong with such tactics and said he saw no need for written guidelines to control the kind of covert or clandestine activities conducted by intelligence agencies.

Defending Mr. Ford's program at a breakfast meeting with reporters, Bush also said he will "very soon" implement a program the President ordered Wednesday requiring written secrecy oaths by all federal employees and employees of government contractors who have access to classified information.

Bush said he is not sure how many additional thousands of persons will be required to sign the oaths, which have been required of employees of the Central Intelligence Agency almost since its establishment in 1947.

The executive order Mr. Ford issued Wednesday, which becomes effective March 1, contains stringent secrecy provisions, including expansion of the secrecy oath program.

The order, which restricts domestic spying activities by all intelligence agencies except the FBI, prohibits only one kind of covert foreign activity—political assassinations.

A large percentage of the CIA's covert projects has involved pouring funds into political movements and campaigns abroad. Some of the money has gone to bribe officials in foreign countries, according to congressional investigations.

The House Intelligence Committee reported that a study of covert operations approved by the Forty Committee during the past 10 years showed that 32 per cent of them involved intervention in elections.

The House committee said it

found considerable evidence that covert actions were "irregularly approved, sloppily implemented, and at times have been forced on a reluctant CIA by the President and his national security adviser."

Bush said he believes the new Operations Advisory Group, which Mr. Ford has established to replace the Forty Committee, will provide better control of covert operations.

The Operations Group also brings Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger back into a policy-making role for covert activities. During the Nixon administration and most of the Ford Administration, Kissinger, as the President's assistant for national security affairs, served as chairman of the Forty Committee.

The House committee, which severely criticized Kissinger, reported that he exercised virtual one-man control over the Forty Committee during the Watergate era—late 1972 to late 1974.

Kissinger lost his spot on the Forty Committee last November when Mr. Ford named Brent Scowcroft to replace him as national security adviser.

Kissinger will join the Operations Group in a reduced role since Mr. Ford's executive order named the secretary of state as a member and the national security adviser as chairman. Other members are the secretary of defense, the director of Central Intelligence, and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The attorney general and the director of the Office of Management and Budget were named as observers of the group to advise and check on legal and budgetary matters.

Bush said he thought the "more formalized structure" of the Operations Group, as contrasted with the Forty Committee, "hopefully would ferret out abuses."

Reporters pressed him to say whether he thought the Watergate coverup would have been exposed if all government employees who handle classified material had been under secrecy oaths.

He replied that any employee

with evidence of wrongdoing could report it to the inspector general and to the new independent three-member oversight board for intelligence activities named by Mr. Ford.

The expanded requirement for secrecy oaths "will not prevent blowing the whistle on wrongdoing," he said.

"The machinery is here to prevent the kind of abuses that happened in the past if you ascribe any credibility to the inspector general and the oversight committee," Bush said.

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