

Strange Hint Of Spying On Senators

Washington

The Senate's senior intelligence overseer mystified his colleagues at a White House leadership breakfast Tuesday morning with a cryptic statement leaving the strong impression that members of the Senate Intelligence Committee are being spied upon.

According to at least five persons who were present, Senator Daniel Inouye (Dem-Hawaii) appeared to hint to President Carter and the House-Senate leaders that members of the Intelligence Committee had been placed under surveillance, but he did not say who ordered surveillance or who was conducting it.

One member who was present said Inouye's remarks implied that the purpose of the surveillance was to determine whether committee members were the source of leaks to the press on Central Intelligence Agency payments to foreign rulers.

However, both President Carter and the Intelligence Committee,

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in statements to the Washington Post, denied that committee members or staff have been placed under FBI or CIA surveillance.

The Senate Intelligence Committee, and later Inouye himself, issued a flat denial that Inouye had ever asked that members or staff of the committee be placed under surveillance by U.S. intelligence agencies.

"I have never made such a request," Inouye said, "and no one has been placed under surveillance." He said his comments earlier at the White House had been misinterpreted.

Inouye said what he had requested was that the U.S. intelligence community "keep its eyes and ears open and learn of activities indicating we are being targeted" by foreign intelligence agents.

"According to the FBI, there has been no attempt to infiltrate this committee," he added.

Senator Gary Hart (Dem-Colo.), a member of the Intelligence Committee, said he understood Inouye to have meant that he wanted to be sure there was no foreign intelligence penetration of the Senate body.

Hart said he was unaware of any breach of committee security by foreign agencies or any other reason for Inouye's announcement.

The leadership meeting at which Inouye made the remark occurred four days after news reports of CIA payments to King Hussein of Jordan. President Carter is understood to have been critical during the meeting of the news leaks on Hussein and of subsidies to other foreign leaders.

Another source close to the committee said all Inouye had meant was that when a foreign agent who is being watched by U.S. security people happens to talk to a senator or staff member on the Intelligence Committee, the committee leadership is apprised of that so that it will be aware of possible attempts to penetrate the committee.

The interpretation given by the committee statement and by Hart was sharply different from the impression left by Inouye on two White House staff members and at least five different House or Senate leaders at the White House breakfast Tuesday morning.

One source said flatly that Inouye had told the group that some members of the committee were under surveillance. A second said that "surveillance" — the exact word used by Inouye — was without the knowledge of members of the committee, while a third said he got the impression that the members had asked for it voluntarily.

One member of the committee, however, who asked not to be identified, said the full committee had never discussed whether it wished to be placed under surveillance and there was certainly no voluntary acceptance of surveillance — if it had occurred — by the committee as a body.

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