

Ford Issues Rules for Spying

Washington

President Ford sharply restricted yesterday the power of the intelligence agencies to intrude upon the lives and activities of American citizens.

In a 36-page executive order that will go into effect March 1, Mr. Ford limited the physical and electronic surveillance of Americans, and issued new regulations on the collection and dissemination of information on Americans. The order bars such practices as burglaries, drug tests on unsuspecting persons and the illegal use of tax return information.

The president also limited infiltration of any group — whether for intelligence purposes or to influence its activities — to groups made up largely of foreign nationals or directly controlled by a foreign government.

Mr. Ford's order covered the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency and other agencies when they are engaged in collection of foreign

intelligence. A separate set of guidelines is now being prepared for the FBI.

An executive order does not carry the sanctions of law. If the order is violated, the employee is subject to dismissal, loss of pay and other administrative disciplinary actions.

The executive order was part of an informational package given to congressional leaders late Tuesday and outlined by Mr. Ford at a televised news conference Tuesday night. 17 FEB

The White House sent to Congress yesterday a bill calling for a secrecy law to punish present and former government employees who improperly disclose the "sources and methods" of gathering national security intelligence.

Mr. Ford's secrecy bill was accompanied by a four-page statement to Congress in which he outlined his actions on intelligence matters and his hopes for legislation. In addition to secrecy, Mr. Ford called for Congress to pass

legislation to permit specifically electronic surveillance in the United States for foreign intelligence purposes with a judge's approval.

The President said he would also ask Congress for the authority to open the United States mails to gather foreign intelligence. However, until such a bill could be passed, the executive order prohibits the intelligence agencies from continuing the practice.

Mr. Ford also said he would support legislation barring plots to assassinate foreign leaders.

In his executive order, Mr. Ford decreed that government agencies would require a "secrecy agreement" from employees anywhere in government who receive information that could be construed as containing "sources and methods" of intelligence.

The agreement would permit the government to go to court to bar the disclosure of national security data. This would extend

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the secrecy agreement system, already in force at the CIA and the FBI, to large new areas of the executive branch. It will not cover employees of Congress or the courts.

Mr. Ford's executive order did relatively little to change the planning and execution of covert operations. The order renamed and formalized the activities of the "40 Committee," a committee of the National Security Council that passes on all covert operations.

Under the order, the members must meet and vote on proposed operations.

The President would then receive the recommendations of the new committee, to be called the Operations Advisory Group, and the positions of the members who may have opposed it. Mr. Ford, White House officials say, still firmly opposes the concept of informing Congress before a decision on a covert operation is made or permitting Congress to become part of the decision-making process.

Despite disclosures of presidential abuse of the intelligence agencies, there was little in Mr. Ford's executive order to protect the agencies from presidential demands or to prohibit future improper pressures from a President.

Under the details of the executive order, a three-member board would receive periodic reports from the inspectors general of the various intelligence agencies and would, in turn, make reports to the attorney general. If the board received a report of what it regarded as abusive, illegal or improper activity, it could recommend that the attorney general punish or prosecute the officials or employees involved.

The order called for the attorney general to report on abuse and impropriety to the President. But the executive order left the power of sanctions within the executive branch of government and thus under the auspices of the President.

The oversight board and the secrecy legislation are dovetailed as part of Mr. Ford's strategy to stop further leaks of information. By creating the oversight board, his aides claim, he has put forward a proper place for intelligence agency employees to report impropriety.

The President used his executive order also to give George Bush, the recently appointed CIA director, more power than any of his predecessors.

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