

Helms Felt CIA Used Improperly

N.Y. Times Service

Washington

Richard M. Helms, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, was quoted yesterday as saying that he felt that White House requests for his agency's assistance in the Watergate affair were improper, but that he never told President Nixon of his concern.

Helms, now ambassador to Iran, was questioned for more than three hours by a Senate appropriations subcommittee that is probing CIA involvement in the Watergate and Pentagon cases.

His testimony was not made public and he refused to answer questions as he emerged from the hearing.

However, Senator John L. McClellan (Dem-Ark.), chairman of the investigating panel, said later that Helms had expressed concern over repeated attempts of White House aides to involve the CIA in the Watergate affair.

CONCERN

Did Helms convey his concern to the President?

"No," McClellan replied. "He did not feel at that time

See Back Page

From Page 1

that he should go to the President about it. He did not want the CIA involved."

Helms told the Senate foreign relations committee earlier this spring, during his confirmation hearings on the ambassadorial post, that the CIA had not been involved in the Watergate affair.

Since then, however, other present and former officials of the CIA have told congressional committees that the agency provided assistance to the White House in two incidents involving the Pentagon papers case and had been approached other

times by White House aides in apparent attempts to cover up events surrounding the break-in of Democratic headquarters at the Watergate complex last year.

OFFICIALS

Helms confirmed the disclosures of other CIA officials but, under questioning, he also defended his earlier denial of CIA involvement in the Watergate affair.

"He did not relate these events to the Watergate," McClellan said.

"After all this Watergate is a very broad-based thing," said Senator Milton R. Young of North Dakota, ranking Republican on the subcommittee.

Asked if Helms had known that White House requests for CIA assistance were part of an attempted cover-up, Senator Roman L. Hruska (Rep-Neb.) replied: "He didn't and, in fact, they were not. The so-called Mexican laundering operation did not relate in any way to the bugging of Democratic headquarters."

INCIDENT

The Mexican "laundering" incident involved Nixon re-election campaign funds that had been channeled through a Mexico City bank and later used to finance various operations connected with the Watergate affair.

Lieutenant General Vernon Walters, deputy director of the CIA, told the Senate Armed Services Committee earlier this week that two White House aides, H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, asked the CIA to call off an FBI probe of the "laundered" campaign funds, in the interests of national security.

Walters also told that committee that John W. Dean III, since ousted as counsel to the President, had asked the CIA to pay the bail and salaries of the men involved in the Watergate break-in, believed to be an attempt to get the agency to provide a "cover" for the operation.

REQUESTS

McClellan said Helms told the subcommittee that he felt these White House requests were wrong and insisted that the CIA not become involved.

But the senator said Helms admitted that he had earlier approved a request of another White House aide for CIA preparation of a "personality assessment" on Daniel Ellsberg, who was later indicted on charges involving his copying and making public the Pentagon papers on United States involvement in Vietnam.

McClellan said that Helms "did not think this quite proper" but that he "reluctantly" granted the request because it had come from the White House.

CASE

McClellan said he felt that the CIA had violated the national security act by be-



AP Wirephoto

RICHARD HELMS
He was concerned

coming involved in the Ellsberg case. The law forbids the CIA from engaging in internal security operations.

But McClellan said he was not sure that the CIA had violated the law "willfully." "They were asked to do it," he said.

The senator said he was convinced that the CIA "has certainly been imposed on by those assistants in the White House who have been named and who are close to the President."

Asked if he felt the CIA should have disclosed these incidents of White House pressure to appropriate committees of Congress before now, McClellan replied: "Well, I think I would have come forward voluntarily and told Congress."