

Top U.S. Aides Took Lie Tests

Washington

High officials of the Pentagon, CIA and State Department were subjected to lie detector tests during a 1971 White House investigation of news leaks on U.S.-Soviet arms limitation talks, a senior government official has disclosed.

The attitude of the White House at the time was described as "almost paranoid."

This was during the period that the Nixon administration ordered wire taps on the phones of National Security Council staff members and newspaper reporters, measures which are now being investigated by acting FBI Director William D. Ruckelshaus.

It has previously been acknowledged by Secretary of State William P. Rogers that a few — perhaps "three or four" — State Department officials were given polygraph tests in the fall of 1971.

But the pervasiveness of the polygraph testing of senior government officials had not been hinted at in the earlier disclosure.

The White House investigation, it was authoritatively reported, was tightly centralized in the White House and bypassed the normal security operations of the agencies most directly concerned with the leaks.

The newspaper stories that triggered the extraordinary White House measures, according to the sources, dealt with U.S. missile capabilities and the American nuclear first-strike capability.

It was in the context of this "tremendous concern" in the White House, these sources noted, that the CIA acquiesced in White House demands that it provide technical assistance to Watergate conspirators E. Howard Hunt and G. Gordon Liddy during 1971.

White House pressures upon the CIA to become implicated in the national security investigation and, later, the Watergate cover-up, is the subject of four separate congressional investigations.

CIA witnesses, including former Director Richard M. Helms and his successor, James R. Schlesinger, have told various Congressional committees that the White House requests were made with a clear suggestion of presidential sanction.

Top presidential aides H.R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman and former White House Counsel John W. Dean III, were all named as having demanded the agency's participation in the successive security and cover-up operations.

By statutory charter the agency is proscribed from carrying out domestic surveillance, police and internal security functions.

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