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A White House 'Spy' Plan That Came Back to Life

Washington

A White House plan to use secret agents to spy on American radicals was ostensibly canceled, then carried out later by an interdepartmental undercover team inside the government, sources close to the Watergate investigation said yesterday.

Two sources, one of whom said he had seen the plan, confirmed it was the text of that plan that former White House Counsel John W. Dean III locked in a safe-deposit box and later turned over to a federal judge. The text, classified top secret, has not yet been released.

STATEMENT

Asked to comment on the

report, White House deputy press secretary Gerald Warren would not go beyond a lengthy statement in which President Nixon last week discussed the Watergate scandal.

Mr. Nixon at that time referred to a domestic-intelligence plan that he said was withdrawn without being implemented in July 1970 after FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover objected to the proposal.

The following December, however, an Intelligence Evaluation Committee was established "to improve coordination among the intelligence community and to prepare evaluations and esti-

mates of domestic intelligence," Mr. Nixon said.

'COVER'

The sources said they couldn't confirm whether or how long the group performed that function. But it soon became "a cover for a secret police operation," the sources said.

They said the unit had access to "virtually all agencies of government" and used that access to intercept mail, tap telephones, audit tax returns and plant informers.

"They were using the national security plan that Hoover objected to," one source said. "That was the blueprint."

UMBRELLA

The Intelligence Evaluation Committee operated under the umbrella of the Justice Department, and sources say it was directed by Bernard Wells, a former FBI agent. It also had representatives from the White House, Treasury and Defense departments, Secret Service, Central Intelligence Agency and National Security Agency.

The sources said its agents were used in gathering information about the Black Panthers, anti-war priests Daniel and Philip Berrigan, and radical student groups.

"We know they were opening mail and harassing people," one source said. "If they went by the book, they did a lot more than that."

Associated Press

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Kissinger's Role In Wiretapping

Washington

Henry A. Kissinger, saying wiretapping is "a distasteful thing," acknowledged yesterday that his office supplied the names of Kissinger aides to be tapped in an investigation of news leaks.

At a White House briefing session, Kissinger said his sole concern was the protection of classified materials that, if made public, could have jeopardized delicate negotiations.

Several aides to President Nixon's assistant for nation-

al security affairs were among those whose phones were wiretapped during a 1969 investigation of a series of leaks.

Kissinger said, "I don't find wiretapping a particularly attractive procedure. I don't find leakage of documents a particularly attractive procedure."

Kissinger said he wanted to emphasize that the 1969 investigation should be separated from political activities that have come to public attention in recent weeks.

Associated Press