

Nixon Aide's Story of Spy Plan Disavowal

Washington

A White House aide who helped draft a 1970 master plan for expanded domestic intelligence gathering indicated yesterday that President Nixon never formally rescinded approval of the operation.

Tom Charles Huston was quoted by Representative Lucien Nedzi (Dem-Mich.), chairman of a House Armed Services subcommittee, as saying that the intelligence agencies involved in the plan were merely notified by telephone to return memorandums in which Huston had said the President had approved of it.

"So far as we could learn, no one at the White House gave formal orders to rescind the plan," Nedzi said, following a two-hour session in which Huston was questioned about possible involvement of the Central Intelligence Agency in the Watergate affair.

Huston declined to discuss his testimony as he emerged from the closed hearing.

Mr. Nixon, in a lengthy statement on May 22, said he had approved the intelligence gathering plan in July, 1970, but that the agencies involved were notified five days later that the approval had been rescinded, primarily because of the opposition of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

The master plan had called for illegal breaking and entering, electronic surveillance and other covert activities in an effort to stem the wave of domestic disorders on college campuses and in urban areas.

Huston reportedly told the subcommittee that his memorandum, summarizing a 43-page report and stating that it had been approved by the President, was sent to

the CIA and other intelligence units on July 23, 1970.

He said the memorandum had been approved by H. R. Haldeman, who was at that time the President's chief of staff.

Huston was quoted by Nedzi as saying that, five days later, he was instructed by Haldeman to request the agencies to return their copies of the memorandum.

Nedzi said Huston, in turn, asked an employee in the White House "situation room" (a military and communications command post)

to relay this message to the agencies.

While Mr. Nixon has maintained that the plan "never went into effect," some of those involved in the Watergate investigation have suggested that key elements of the plan may have been adopted in two subsequent break-ins.

The two illegal entries in question were the September, 1971, burglary of the California office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist and the June, 1972, break-in at the Democratic National committee headquarters in the Watergate complex.

Nedzi said Huston told the subcommittee the 1970 master plan did not call for any expanded role for the CIA.

"I got the impression that the only reason the plan was drawn up was because the White House was unhappy about Hoover's job in handling domestic blowups around the country," Nedzi said.