

Mitchell On Huston Spy Plan

Washington

Former Attorney General John N. Mitchell testified yesterday he had opposed the "Huston Plan" for expanded domestic intelligence-gathering because of its illegal aspects, and that he had made his objections known to both President Nixon and H. R. Haldeman.

The plan, drawn up by White House aide Tom Charles Huston, was presented in July, 1970, to Mr. Nixon, who initially approved its recommendations. Mr. Nixon said in May, however, that he withdrew his approval five days later, in large part because of the opposition of the late J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI.

'DISSENT'

Mitchell said that the plan had been brought to his attention by Hoover, and met with him and with Cartha D. DeLoach, then Hoover's deputy, to discuss the "so-called Huston plan." The discussion was brief and not detailed, he said, but included "Mr. Hoover's dissent."

Of his own reaction to the plan, Mitchell said: "I was of the opinion I needed very little convincing by Mr. DeLoach and Mr. Hoover that this was not the proper approach to the problems that existed at the time, and I joined Mr. Hoover in opposing its implementation."

Mitchell said he had not been aware that Mr. Nixon had approved the plan briefly. His own opposition, he said, was based on "the very simple reason that in the case of domestic problems that I was very much opposed to the thought of surreptitious entry, the mail covers, and all of the other aspects of it that were involved at the particular time."

RECOLLECTION

It was his recollection, he said, "that I talked to both Mr. Haldeman and the President about the subject matter," and that they "were appreciative of my views on the subject matter and reconsidered it and that was the end of it."

He added that he had no formal notice of his "understanding (that) the plan had not been implemented" but "was just told verbally that it was nil."

Huston was quoted Monday as saying that there had been no formal orders to rescind the plan, only a series of telephone calls to the intelligence agencies involved asking for the return of the memos indicating Mr. Nixon's approval.

The plan, which Huston has said was approved by Haldeman, called for a variety of covert activities, including illegal entry and electronic surveillance of "individuals and groups . . . who pose a major threat to the internal security."

New York Times