

Alleged Pentagon Spying Probed

By Michael Getler
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Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger has begun an informal investigation into allegations that White House documents on secret U.S. diplomacy were being passed to the Pentagon without authorization in 1971, the Defense Department said yesterday.

At the same time, the Pentagon also moved to take some of the heat off the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, who has been named in some accounts of the alleged spying as the recipient of such unauthorized documents.

Questioned again yesterday on the episode, Pentagon spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim repeatedly pointed out that Moorer in June, 1972—well after the alleged spying incidents took place and had been secretly investigated by the White House "plumbers" group—had been reappointed by President Nixon to a second two-year term as the nation's top military officer.

The implication of Friedheim's remarks was that the admiral would not have been reappointed if the President had any reason to be unhappy

with Moorer or suspicious of his loyalty.

Friedheim said Schlesinger had already talked to Moorer about the allegations, that Moorer had repeated his public denials of any involvement, and that Schlesinger "at this point has seen nothing that would impair his confidence in the professional capabilities of Adm. Moorer," nor, Friedheim added, "his personal dedication and honesty."

At the same time, Friedheim indicated that Schlesinger's personal questioning of people with knowledge of the affair had only just begun, and that "I don't think he has drawn any conclusions."

Schlesinger also is expected to discuss the situation with former Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird and White House counsel J. Fred Buzhardt, who was the Pentagon's chief legal officer during Laird's 1969-1973 tenure at the Defense Department.

Friedheim indicated that Laird had also ordered an investigation into leaks to the press in July, 1971, of the U.S.-Soviet nuclear arms talks and when White House documents on the India-Pakistan war appeared in Jack Anderson's column in December, 1971.

Friedheim claimed he did not know if a report was filed on the Laird investigation of the Anderson leak. It was that leak which was the focal point for the White House plumbers investigation and the key to allegations of a military spying ring in the White House bent either on better-informing their bosses in the Pentagon of secret shifts in U.S. policy or perhaps of embarrassing the architect of that policy, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger.

If there is a Laird report, that could provide a different assessment of the White House-Pentagon links than one allegedly included in a White House plumbers report by David Young which reportedly links Moorer to receipt of some unauthorized documentation.

Meanwhile, Sen. John C. Stennis (D-Miss.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, told reporters that he, too, plans to begin an informal inquiry into the allegations of unauthorized data-gathering, but that he would await the return of his committee and Congress next week before deciding on whether to hold hearings and a full investigation.