

Sen. Baker's CIA report

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WASHINGTON — Debonair Richard Helms, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, leaned forward in the witness chair at the Senate Watergate hearings.

Raising his voice for emphasis, his fingers thumped the table.

"The agency had nothing to do with the Watergate break-in," he declared. "I hope all the newsmen in the room hear me clearly now."

Everybody clearly heard him, including Sen. Howard Baker, the committee's Republican vice chairman of the hearings.

But Baker, apparently, didn't entirely believe him.

After dropping hints that the public may have "seen only the tip of the iceberg" concerning the CIA role in the Watergate affair, Baker turned his staff loose to find the other seven-eighths.

After a 3½ month investigation, including closed door questioning of Helms and some other CIA employes, Baker has turned over a half-inch thick indexed report to Sen. John Stennis (D-Miss.), chairman of the Senate Armed Service Committee, and to the Watergate committee.

Baker's still secret report has become a cause celebre in Washington.

Baker has been accused of acting as a White House agent in trying to rig a national security rationale for the White House plumbers and the Watergate and Ellsberg break-ins. Critics contend the idea for the "CIA plot" came from Charles Colson, former Nixon aide and troubleshooter indicted in both the coverup and the Ellsberg break-in.

While the document has not been made public, some of its contents have surfaced in bits and pieces through leaks.

Among its allegations:

- That the Mullen Co., an international public relations firm that employed E. Howard Hunt after he retired from the CIA, was a CIA front.
- That Robert Bennett, president of the Mullen Co., reported to a CIA officer on July 10, 1972, some details he presumably got from Hunt of the June 17 Watergate burglary.
- That Bennett's report was channeled to Helms, who initialed it July 14, but never passed it on to authorities.
- That Hunt met secretly with the CIA psychiatrist drawing up the psychological profile of Dr. Daniel Ellsberg late in October, 1971, two months after the CIA said it broke its links with him.
- That a CIA technician who developed the film from the camera which Hunt got from the CIA prior to the Ellsberg break-in also blew up the film large enough to see that the pictures were taken in Southern California and to read the name "Dr. Fielding."
- That a CIA memo alleges that as chairman of the Watergate committee Sen. Sam Ervin agreed to play down possible CIA links in the Watergate coverup. Ervin aides said the memo is wholly inaccurate.

The Baker document reportedly does not attempt to draw any conclusions. But what is known about it suggests that the CIA may have known more about what is going on than its officials want to admit, and that they sought to cover up the agency's embarrassing connections with the Hunt and Liddy White House enterprise.

At the same time, there is no indication that the Baker findings support any allegations the CIA had any involvement in the Watergate break-in.



'Mr. Nice Guy'

Dwight L. Chapin, Nixon's former appointments secretary who is charged with four counts of lying to a grand jury, goes on trial tomorrow, the first of a series related to Watergate. Characterized as a "nice guy," Chapin enlisted and gave orders to political trickster Donald Segretti.

—AP Photo