

Merry-Go-Round *SF Chronicle Aug. 4 1966*

Secret Surveillance Behind Rusk's Back



Drew Pearson

THIS COLUMN has now obtained a copy of another letter written by Frances Knight, efficient head of the State Department's passport office, which goes behind the back of her chief, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, regarding the surveillance of American citizens traveling abroad.

The issue arose when it was revealed that the FBI and State Department had arranged a special surveillance on H. Stuart Hughes, distinguished Harvard professor, because he had opposed President Johnson's policy in Vietnam.

Miss Knight made it clear in her letter, this one written to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, that she and Hoover were in cahoots regarding the continued espionage on American citizens traveling abroad.

This is the second time a letter has come to light written by Miss Knight in violation of either the Hatch Act or of approved government procedures.

The second letter, addressed to J. Edgar Hoover, was written March 21, 1966, and reads:

"Dear Mr. Hoover:

I have just tried to reach you by telephone, but without success, and have been told that you may not be available for some hours. As I have a communication to make to you, which I regard as one of extreme urgency, I am sending you this note

by special messenger. If you wish, I would be available this evening to discuss the matter with you in detail.

This morning I have already received several telephone calls from newspapermen inquiring for further details about the FBI requested of February 6th concerning Professor Hughes.

I am seriously afraid that this interest may indicate preparations for a sustained press campaign against us. We have already discussed the attitude of the Secretary of State towards the long-established practice of the department making inquiries at the request of the FBI. I cannot help expressing to you the alarm I feel at various pointers which, to my mind, show clearly that he is looking for suitable pretexts to put an end to this practice. My own position in the department is such that I do not wish to commit too many details to paper, for reasons that will be obvious to you. But I would willingly elaborate them for you personally if you wish to pursue the matter, as I have no doubt you will. Forgive me if I sound alarmist, but I am quite certain from what I have heard that a principle of vital importance is at stake which affects the whole conduct of the government, and in particular, the effectiveness of the bureau.

Cordially,
F. Knight"