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STAT
Ford, Hill
Clash on
Secrets

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The Ford administration and Congress came close to open political warfare yesterday over future control of the nation's intelligence secrets — a confrontation triggered by the leak of portions of the House intelligence committee's final report.

Angry accusations were traded by outgoing Central Intelligence Agency Director William E. Colby, the White House, congressional intelligence critics and the Ford administration's defenders on Capitol Hill.

It was in this setting that the staff of the House committee recommended the extension of criminal penalties for intelligence leaks to staff members of a reconstituted House intelligence oversight committee.

The staff report also called for prompt congressional notification of covert foreign actions by all intelligence agencies, abolition of the Defense Intelligence Agency, unilateral authority by the committee to release any information or documents in its possession, and fixed six-year terms for members.

The staff proposals were unveiled at a meeting of the House committee enlivened by partisan accusations fixing blame for leakage of the House report to The New York Times. Staff director A. Searle Field of the House committee hinted that the leaks originated with the executive branch and said he was "as certain as I can be" that they did not come from the committee staff.

"The executive branch has been putting on a tremendous campaign to insure that oversight doesn't work," Field told the committee. He said the State Department, Pentagon and other executive agencies had "dozens of copies" of the report and

testified that it would be "incredible" if the executive branch had been able to maintain secrecy.

Colby, in what was expected to be his last day in office, issued an angry counterattack to the House committee, denouncing its report as "totally biased and a disservice to our nation, giving a thoroughly wrong impression of American intelligence."

White House press secretary Ron Nessen joined in the fray with the declaration that "this unauthorized release raises serious questions about how classified material can be handled by Congress when the national security is at stake."

In a letter, a copy of which was obtained by The Washington Post, CIA special counsel Mitchell Rogovin wrote House intelligence committee Chairman Otis G. Pike (D-N.Y.) last week that the committee's first draft report was "an unrelenting indictment couched in biased, pejorative and factually erroneous terms."

The significance of the leak seemed to lie more in its role as a catalyst of political reactions than as a substantive addition to public knowledge of CIA excesses.

The administration and the national security bureaucracy, while paying homage to the concept of more rigorous congressional oversight, are opposed to some of the reforms being pushed by advocates of oversight legislation. Chief objections are to recommendations that Congress be permitted to declassify intelligence information on its own initiative and that the new oversight committee be informed immediately of covert actions.

A significant number of lawmakers, reacting to the revelations of the Senate intelligence committee report on assassination plots, have come to the conclusion that covert actions should be subjected to stringent congressional control or outlawed, with limited qualification.

The findings that emerged from the House intelligence

committee leak covered a range of matters from the donation of Oriental rugs to Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger by the leader of the now-defunct Kurdish revolt to a critique of intelligence cost figures attributed to the CIA. Here are some of those findings:

—Kurdish rebels in Iraq suffered more than 100,000 casualties in their rebellion. Kissinger received three valuable rugs as a gift from rebel leader Mustafa Parzani and his wife, Nancy, was given a necklace. A State Department spokesman acknowledged yesterday that

Kissinger received one rug and turned it over to the White House in compliance with a law prohibiting government officials from keeping gifts from foreign officials. The spokesman denied that Mrs. Kissinger had received a necklace from Parzani.

—U.S. intelligence failed to predict the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia largely because it lost track of an entire Soviet division in Poland. It also failed to anticipate India's explosion of a nuclear device.

—A 1973 CIA memorandum said that Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) sought to "protect" the agency from an inquiry by the Senate Multinational Corporations Subcommittee headed by Frank Church (D-Idaho). The object was to prevent CIA official William Broe from testifying on covert operations in Chile. Broe, as it turned out, did testify. Jackson denied that he interceded improperly. Colby commented that it was "perfectly appropriate" for the agency to discuss the matter with Jackson, a member of the CIA's congressional oversight committee.

—The report put a \$10 billion price tag on the combined operation of all U.S. intelligence agencies, several of which substantially outspend the CIA. This has been an outside figure previously used in literature on the agency.

Colby, in an interview with the Associated Press, acknowledged that despite his condemnation of leaks, he was the anonymous source of an earlier story describing CIA

contacts with journalists.

"I did tell them, yes," Colby said of The Washington Star, which revealed in November, 1973, that journalists were

serving as CIA information conduits. As reported by AP, when asked if he was the "authoritative source" quoted in the Star story, Colby said, "I don't want to confirm it, but you're not far off."

He said he acknowledged the relationship between the CIA and the journalists during a meeting with the Star's editorial board. More recently, the director has proposed legislation that would stiffen criminal sanctions against any government employee revealing intelligence secrets.

In another development yesterday, FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley testified that expanded congressional oversight of his agency could jeopardize its investigative work. Speaking to the Senate Government Operations Committee, which is drawing up new oversight legislation, Kelley said that increasing congressional requests for information and testimony by high FBI officials, as well as new civil liberties laws, are hampering the bureau's ability to carry out its duties.

At the the end of the day it was announced that Colby, who was fired by the President in November, had been awarded the National Security Medal by Mr. Ford. "Colby has led the CIA and American intelligence community through the most troubled period in its history," the President said during a brief White House ceremony.