

# White House Says Leak on CIA in Italy Damages U.S.

BY RUDY ABRAMSON

Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—Accusing Congress of leaking another government secret, the White House charged Wednesday that U.S. foreign policy was damaged by circulation of reports that the Central Intelligence Agency recently had funneled \$6 million into Italy to support non-Communist political factions.

Describing President Ford as angry over the reports, White House Press Secretary Ron Nessen said that they again raise the question of how "to responsibly deal with Congress' interest in playing an increasing role in foreign policy and intelligence policy."

The White House spokesman refused to confirm or deny the reports that the CIA had involved the United States in Italian politics in an effort to limit Communist gains in the country.

Nessen told reporters that, true or not, such reports "undermine our ca-

pability to carry out our foreign policy.

"There is a strong suspicion in the White House that the allegations originated in the Congress."

Informed sources Wednesday confirmed reports that CIA Director William E. Colby had briefed key members of Congress last month on the channeling of millions of dollars to non-Communist Italian politicians.

The sources said that several members of Congress raised objections to the plan, which apparently had not been implemented at the time of the briefing, since Colby had told the lawmakers that the President "had decided" to take the step.

One of those who heard the briefing was Rep. Wayne L. Hays (D-

Ohio), who was described in reports published Wednesday as rigidly opposed to the scheme.

One account quoted a source as saying that Hays "damned near tore Colby's head off."

In Ohio during the congressional recess, Hays denied Wednesday that he had leaked the story. He said he had been trying to reach Ford by telephone to tell the President he had not made the disclosure.

But Hays acknowledged that Colby had given members of Congress such a briefing and that he (Hays) had expressed his unhappiness with the plan.

He said he had told the CIA director: "Whoever dreamed this scheme up ought to see a psychiatrist."

It is widely believed that Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger supported the effort to slow the Communist move in Italy. Hays said he had no indication whether either Kissinger or Colby planned the venture.

Hours after publication of the reports Wednesday, the Christian Democrat government in Italy, short of money and support, resigned. Premier Aldo Moro and his minority coalition stepped aside 13 months after forming the government of Christian Democrats and Republicans and after the Socialist Party had withdrawn its support.

The party has never achieved a full role in the Italian government. And the CIA—though not supporting anti-Communist factions in recent years—is understood to have first sent money to friendly Italian political groups more than two decades ago.

The White House refusal to confirm or deny involvement in Italy was in line with its customary stance regarding reported CIA operations.