

FRONT PAGE
BALTIMORE SUN
10 August 1977

CIA to trim 800 workers in clandestine operations

By ERNEST B. FURGURSON
Washington Bureau of The Sun

Washington—Adm. Stansfield Turner, newly granted greater authority than any intelligence director in American history, disclosed yesterday a wholesale cutback in the Central Intelligence Agency's clandestine operations division.

The director also said he has ordered a high-priority crackdown on news leaks and security lapses in the nation's spy apparatus.

In addition, the admiral said flatly that the U.S. intelligence community has not bugged South Korea's "Blue House" or taped conversations by its president, Park Chung-hee. Such allegations have been made in connection with the bribery scandal surrounding the Korean businessman, Tongsun Park.

Admiral Turner made known that the CIA would undertake a "major slimming effort" by letting go more than 800 employees in the super-secret directorate of operations, which he described as "the heart of the agency."

They will be laid off mostly by normal attrition, he said, rather than by firing.

The admiral explained that the operations division had grown tremendously during the Vietnam war and that its field staff already had been reduced. Now the directorate headquarters staff will follow. This reduction is believed to involve about 15 per cent of the entire operations division's payroll.

Admiral Turner did not connect the reduction with any of the recent controversies in which the agency has been embroiled.

At breakfast with reporters, the admiral said that not only espionage but intentional and accidental leaks of information already have done "permanent damage" to the national intelligence effort.

He disclosed that he had started a series of surprise investigations of security practices at private firms working under contract with the CIA—and found faulty procedures for handling secret material.

In the future, he warned, those intelligence contractors had better realize that their contracts depend on their observance of security rules.

The agency does business with defense industries as well as with private "think tanks" and universities, among others. The admiral did not specify individual firms that had been investigated.

One recent espionage case involved sale of secret data to the Russians by employees of TRW Systems, Inc., a major supplier of reconnaissance satellites for

the CIA. An employee and an accomplice were convicted of spying in Los Angeles in April. In June, a former CIA staff member here was sentenced to life imprisonment for attempting to sell the names of hundreds of covert personnel to Soviet agents.

Admiral Turner said both those cases had done "very considerable" damage to the intelligence program. As an example of a damaging news leak, he referred to reports that Jordan's King Hussein had received payments from the CIA for many years for his help in the Middle East.

A number of people already working for the agency abroad have said, "I can't work for you if my name is going to be in the press tomorrow," the director asserted. This news leak has "done some permanent damage" and is likely to cause more, he said.

Admiral Turner told reporters that he was trying to tighten control of secrets by pushing more material into the unclassified category, making it available to the public, and thus theoretically creating a more respectful attitude toward properly classified matter. He also said he was considering administrative, civil and criminal sanctions against those who illegally disclose secrets.

Last week President Carter gave the

admiral—his Naval Academy classmate—budget and task-setting authority over the whole intelligence establishment. This was considered a victory for Admiral Turner over Harold Brown, the Secretary of Defense, his rival for domination of the national spy machinery. But the admiral described it yesterday as a "middle-ground solution" of intelligence reorganization.

He predicted that in coming years effort will be directed toward more economic information and proportionately less about Communist nations.

Asked whether the CIA had eavesdropped on President Park, the admiral declared that he spoke for the entire intelligence community in saying no. He avoided elaboration.

During the congressional investigation of the Tongsun Park story, there have been reports that such eavesdropping had linked President Park with Tongsun Park, who left this country as the probe was beginning.

Admiral Turner said he is notifying all universities involved of their unwitting association with the secret MK-ULTRA program, which included testing drugs on human subjects. But he said that the great majority of the 149 projects on that list were ones in which children could safely be involved.