

~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~

narcotics-related activity. The list was formally documented by USIB in 1971.¹⁹ But by far the most controversial expansion of the list occurred in 1967, and it involved domestic terrorism.

~~(S-CCO)~~ In 1967 the country appeared to be going up in flames. Vietnam War protests were becoming common, and "ghetto riots" in America's urban centers had virtually destroyed sections of Detroit and Los Angeles. President Johnson wanted to know if the domestic antiwar movement was receiving help from abroad, and he commissioned Richard Helms at CIA to find out. CIA came up with very little, but in the process of mobilizing the intelligence community, the Army was tasked with monitoring communications for the purpose of answering Johnson's question. On October 20, Major General William P. Yarborough, the Army chief of staff for intelligence, informed NSA of the effort, in which ASA was involved, and asked for help.²⁰

~~(S-CCO)~~ With FBI as the prime source of names, NSA began expanding the watch list to include domestic terrorist and foreign radical suspects. The watch list eventually contained over 1,600 names and included such personages as columnist Art Buchwald, journalist Tom Wicker, civil rights leaders Martin Luther King and Whitney Young, the boxer Muhammed Ali, and even politicians such as Frank Church and Howard Baker. Virtually all the names were provided by other government organizations. However, NSA did add thirteen names, all but two of them Agency employees who were acknowledged spies, such as Martin and Mitchell. One of them was the aforementioned Percy Fellwock.²¹

~~(S-CCO)~~ The project, which became known officially as Minaret in 1969, employed unusual procedures. NSA distributed reports without the usual serialization. They were designed to look like HUMINT reports rather than SIGINT, and readers could find no originating agency. Years later the NSA lawyer who first looked at the procedural aspects stated that the people involved seemed to understand that the operation was disreputable if not outright illegal.²²

(U) ASA's monitoring of domestic radical communications was almost certainly illegal, according to the legal opinions of two different groups of government lawyers. Even worse, it had come to public notice in 1970 when NBC aired a program alleging that ASA had monitored civilian radios during the Democratic Convention of 1968. ASA quickly closed it down and went out of the civil disturbance monitoring business.²³

~~(S-CCO)~~ Minaret was quite another matter, and it did not depend on ASA for its existence. Lew Allen had been director for less than two weeks when his chief lawyer, Roy Banner, informed him of Minaret - it was the first the new director had known of the program. Banner noted a recent court decision on wiretaps that might affect the Watch List. A federal judge had ruled in a case involving leading Weathermen (SDS radical wing) that all federal agencies, including NSA, must disclose any illegal wiretaps of the defendants. NSA's communications monitoring, although not technically a wiretap, could be construed as such by recent court decisions. Although the Weathermen in question might not be on the Watch List, the time was not far off when a court case would expose the list.

~~HANDLE VIA TALENT KEYHOLE COMINT CONTROL SYSTEMS JOINTLY~~~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~