

The New York Times

Attack Widens on Clinton Staff Practices

By NEIL A. LEWIS JULY 4, 1996

The Clinton Administration sent detailed questionnaires to longtime White House employees asking them about their finances and their personal and political activities, the Pennsylvania Congressman leading an inquiry into the White House's handling of personnel information said today.

It is unclear how many employees received the questionnaires, which were sent to nonpolitical household staff as well as political appointees.

But those who did receive them were instructed to return them to Craig Livingstone, who resigned as head of the White House personnel security office last week over his role in that office's improper acquisition of as many as 900 confidential F.B.I. files, many of them on prominent Republicans.

The 10-page questionnaire asked the employees to list anything they had ever written for publication; all their jobs since the age of 21; their party affiliations and those of their spouses, and all assets.

The questionnaire also asked employees whether they had ever filed a late income tax return, and it asked them to list "each membership you have had with any civic, social, charitable, educational, professional, fraternal, benevolent or religious organization, private club or other membership organization during the last 10 years."

The Pennsylvania Congressman, Representative William F. Clinger, a Republican who heads the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee, today asked Jack Quinn, the White House counsel, to explain why employees had been asked to answer the questionnaire. White House officials have said the questionnaire was an understandable effort by a new Administration to learn about those in close proximity to the First Family.

Aides to Mr. Clinger said he also wanted to know why the White House had the Federal Bureau of Investigation do a new background check on a member of the First Family's personal staff just two years after his last prior investigation, even though such inquiries routinely occur only every five years.

The staff member, Christopher B. Emery, was dismissed for disloyalty in March 1994, just weeks after he had been reinvestigated. He had been a White House usher, a nonpolitical appointment, for nine years.

In an interview with The Associated Press today, Mr. Emery said that he had made clear to his supervisor and to the Federal Bureau of Investigation that he had recently been investigated, and that he had been puzzled as to why he was being reinvestigated so soon.

Documents issued by Mr. Clinger's committee last week appeared to show that Mr. Emery had been listed within the White House as being due for a new background investigation by the F.B.I. The documents, which came from the personal computer of Anthony Marceca, a civilian investigator who worked in the White House personnel security office, show Mr. Emery's last investigation as having been in 1986.

Citing the documents from Mr. Marceca's computer, Jane Sherburne, a special counsel to President Clinton, said a reinvestigation of Mr. Emery might have occurred because "the security office might well have believed he was properly due for a reinvestigation." She said the White House did not yet have a full explanation of what happened with Mr. Emery because officials there had been restrained from conducting their own investigation in deference to the Whitewater independent counsel, who is looking into the issue first.

At the time of Mr. Emery's dismissal, the office of Hillary Rodham Clinton said the reason was that he had shown "an incredible lack of discretion" in having returned a telephone call to former First Lady Barbara Bush to help her with a computer problem. News reports then said Mrs. Clinton was concerned that Mr. Emery had discussed personal matters about the Clintons with Mrs. Bush.