

NY Herald - Trib
□ 3/24/66



Sen. Edward M. Kennedy

Passport Hassle: Teddy Steps In

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WASHINGTON.

Sen. Edward Kennedy, D., Mass., seriously questioned yesterday the ground upon which the State Department Passport office asked two U. S. embassies to keep track of a Harvard historian when he goes abroad this fall.

In a letter to Secretary of State Dean Rusk, he defended Prof. H. Stuart Hughes, who ran as an independent against Sen. Kennedy in the 1962 election, as "a gentleman of integrity who has expressed his convictions in an honest, forthright manner."

In a State Department cable dated March 8, the U. S. embassies in Moscow and Paris were requested to send back information on Prof. Hughes who, according to an FBI request for the information, "reportedly in the past has had strong convictions toward communism."

Eight days later, the cable was rescinded by the Passport

Office, and its director, Frances Knight, was told that in the future all such alerts must be cleared by the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, which includes the Passport Office.

A DENIAL

In a memo from Phillip B. Heymann, acting Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs administrator, the new procedure was firmly laid down. State Department spokesmen denied that the memo constituted a "rebuttal" to Miss Knight.

But Sen. Kennedy yester-

day asked for a far more sweeping look at the State Department practice of passing on requests for any type of surveillance of U. S. citizens traveling on valid passports.

"Regardless of the individual involved," he wrote to Mr. Rusk, "I am dismayed to discover that once a passport is granted to a U. S. citizen to travel freely in the country of his intensions, he may still be differentiated from other citizens by prior messages to our embassies concerning his political beliefs and calling for some form of surveillance."

In Boston yesterday, Prof. Hughes told a reporter that he thought "this sudden interest on the part of the FBI must be connected with my outspoken opposition to the war in Viet Nam."

It was learned that the Passport Office has for years passed on requests to U. S. embassies from many investigative agencies of the government. The requests ask for "pertinent information" that comes to the embassy on the traveling U. S. citizen.

FBI SILENT

While no reliable figure was given by State Department sources, the number of these requests—most of them originating through the FBI—is estimated to run into hundreds yearly.

Most of the alerts include just three paragraphs: a biography; a listing of suspicious or reportedly suspicious activities, political and otherwise, and the request for information.

The Hughes request, including the FBI background on him, was not highly classified, and it was distributed widely throughout the government as well as to the two embassies abroad. Other similar alerting cables, State Department sources said, are treated in the same manner.

An FBI spokesman said yesterday that a decision had been made not to comment on any part of the matter.

Sen. Kennedy asked that Mr. Rusk send him a copy of the cable sent to the two U. S. embassies on Prof. Hughes.

"I feel it is most important to determine," he wrote, "who makes the judgment that a traveling citizen is pro-Communist, whether that judgment is confirmed by the Passport Office when it transmits the request for surveillance and what further use is made of such a determination and of any information obtained by this investigatory activity."