

# Congressional Reform

## OVERSIGHT, From A1

- Vesting power of disclosure in the new committee or the full Senate of any intelligence matter deemed to require public airing, even over presidential objections.
- Timely sharing of secrets by the intelligence agencies with the Senate overseers to give Congress a chance to blow the whistle on executive actions before they become irreversible policy, as in Indochina and Angola.
- Giving the new committee jurisdiction over the entire intelligence community, which spreads through 11 separate civilian and military agencies.

Now the reformers, led by Senate intelligence committee chairman and presidential aspirant Frank Church (D-Idaho), would be happy to settle for much less.

They would, for example, accept limiting the new committee's jurisdiction to the CIA and civilian intelligence functions of the FBI. They are also willing to have the new committee share legislative and budgetary authority with the Armed Services and Judiciary committees for the CIA and FBI, respectively.

Church and his allies have given up hope for favorable action in the Senate Rules Committee, which is now chopping up the original version of S. 400 to assuage the powerful elders of Congress who want to preserve their military and intelligence baronies intact. Church's strategy is to have the decisive shootout on the Senate floor in a major public debate. To this end he has timed the final reports of his select committee—the last salvos of disclosure—for



SEN. FRANK CHURCH  
...eyes floor showown

the end of April. The floor fight is now set for May 6.

The change of fortunes for the intelligence reformers began last December when the Senate investigating committee stopped its flow of hearings and reports detailing the abuses. At that point there were no new horrors to arouse indignation and fuel the crusade for corrective action.

On Dec. 23 the CIA's station chief in Athens, Richard S. Welch, was assassinated. The administration linked the murder of Welch by still-unknown assassins with the torrent of disclosure, including the names of operatives, of intelligence activities. Even the former director of the agency, William E. Colby, acknowledged that the Welch assassination was a major turning point in the politics of the intelligence controversy in the CIA's favor.

While most of Welch's col-

leagues killed in the line of duty are commemorated by anonymous stars chiseled into the entrance hall of the CIA's headquarters, his own funeral was conducted with impressive national panoply, with full television coverage, attended by President Ford and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger.

In January there ensued a controversy over the leak of the House intelligence committee's report to CBS News and The New York Times, then, in textual form, to The Village Voice. This further raised congressional hackles and fed the arguments of the administration that Congress could not be trusted with secrets. The result was an extraordinary House vote to suppress the report.

The House committee, chaired by Otis G. Pike (D-N.Y.), went out of existence in a bedlam of political recrimination, its staff the target of an FBI investigation and its report censored by vote of the House. Even in the leaked version the substance of the Pike report went virtually ignored because of the controversy surrounding its bootlegged publication.

At this point the administration began a series of well-timed public initiatives to foster the impression that President Ford was carrying out by executive action many of those very reforms upon which Congress embarked through the legislative process.

On Feb. 18 Mr. Ford announced to Congress his promulgation of an executive order that he said set forth "strict guidelines to control the activities of these (intelligence) agencies." The order, said

# of CIA Review Stymied



**RICHARD S. WELCH**  
... murder a turning point

Mr. Ford, "will eliminate abuses and questionable activities on the part of the foreign intelligence agencies while at the same time permitting them to get on with their vital work of gathering and assessing information."

The President, while blessing the principle of "successful and effective congressional oversight," stole the march on Congress by appointing his own Board of Overseers for foreign intelligence. He named as its chairman Robert D. Murphy, 81, who was a presidential intelligence adviser at the time of the Bay of Pigs and four of the five assassination attempts against foreign leaders in which the Senate intelligence commit-

tee found the CIA to be implicated.

In private, not-for-attribution conversations, intelligence advisers close to the President look upon the year of congressional investigations with amused disparagement.

They say, for example, that the abuses Congress and the press claim to have uncovered actually surfaced in an internal CIA review ordered by then CIA Director James R. Schlesinger in 1973—the so-called "family jewels. Report of more than 600 pages which leaked, in part, to the press. Schlesinger ordered the inquiry to find out the extent of CIA involvement in the Watergate scandal.

The backroom view in the White House is that there should be a single oversight committee on Capitol Hill to answer the clamor for corrective action—but one which is fully subject to presidential determination of what can be disclosed to it and by it.

There is a strong sympathy for this view among the congressional elders who have looked with suspicion upon the prospect of an upstart intelligence oversight committee with genuine investigative powers since it was first proposed 20 years ago by Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.).

Sen. John C. Stennis is reportedly advocating a plan which would vest all intelligence oversight in his own Armed Services Committee,

as it has been since the creation of CIA in 1947. It envisions a tripling of the staff—from one to three—of his subcommittee on intelligence and an expansion of its charter to provide what the Mississippi Democrat inimitably described as a "look-see-surveillance-over-look-kind of coordination group."

The White House was reported to be looking with keen interest at such an approach.