

LATimes
Editorial
Page →

1-1-61

Obligation of New CIA Overseers

With the admittance of three new participants to the Senate watchdog committee on activities of the Central Intelligence Agency, a long and disruptive hassle over supervision of the agency has apparently been settled.

Last year, Sens. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) and Eugene McCarthy (D-Minn.) led a fight to have members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, of which Fulbright is chairman, admitted to the special subcommittee which oversees the super-secret activities of the CIA.

They argued that the CIA, as an arm of government with extensive overseas operations, clearly is involved in the conduct—and possibly even the making—of U.S. foreign policy.

Thus, in their view, the Foreign Relations Committee deserved a full voice in the special CIA oversight committee, which has always been composed solely of men who sit on the armed services and appropriations committees.

Sen. Richard Russell (D-Ga.), who heads the watchdog committee, declined to enlarge its membership on grounds that the existing arrangement had proved effective — and the more people were

brought into the secret briefings, the more chance of a security leak.

There was also an awareness that Fulbright is a vociferous critic of CIA operations, and a suspicion that he was interested mainly in curbing its powers.

The issue came to a vote in the Senate last July and Russell won a clear victory.

However, the Georgian clearly did not relish fighting the battle all over again this year. As a result, what appears to be a sensible arrangement has been worked out.

Fulbright and two highly respected colleagues — Senate Majority leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) and Sen. Bourke B. Hickenlooper (R-Ia.) — have been invited to participate fully in activities of the watchdog committee.

CIA Director Richard Helms gave the first top secret briefing to the enlarged group Monday.

The Russell committee, and its counterpart on the House side, have enviable records of handling highly secret information without succumbing to the temptation to make political or factional use of it.

It is now up to the three new members to serve in the same buttoned-lip spirit.

C.I.A. WATCHDOGS INVITE FULBRIGHT

Dispute With Foreign Policy
Panel Apparently Ended

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7 (UPI)—J. W. Fulbright and two other members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee were invited today to ~~attend~~ sessions of the Senate subcommittee that ~~meets~~ meets over ~~the~~ the ~~operations~~ operations of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The invitation to the Arkansas Democrat, who is chairman of the foreign relations panel, apparently ended a long dispute over supervision of the spy agency.

Senator Richard B. Russell, Georgia Democrat who heads the informal watchdog group, said the three foreign policy experts were being invited to a session Monday with Richard Helms, director of the C.I.A. In addition to Mr. Fulbright, invitations were extended to Senator Bourke B. Hickenlooper of Iowa, senior Republican on the foreign relations committee, and to the Senate Democratic leader, Mike Mansfield of Montana.

Plan Rejected Last July

Last July, after considerable controversy, the Senate voted down a proposal that would have empowered the present watchdog subcommittee to include Foreign Relations Committee members. The 51 to 28 vote followed a five-hour debate, most of it conducted in an unusual closed session of the Senate.

At that time, members of the Foreign Relations Committee contended that they should have a role in overseeing intelligence operations because they said the operations involved foreign policy. Mr. Russell called the expansion an attempt to "usurp" jurisdiction of the Appropriations and the Armed Services Committees.

The six-member C.I.A. group is drawn from the latter two committees.

Covers All Meetings

Mr. Russell said the representatives of the Foreign Relations Committee would be invited to attend all watchdog subcommittee sessions even those that deal primarily with appropriations.

My present purpose is to invite them to all of the meetings at least for this session of Congress, Mr. Russell said when asked if the new arrangement would be permanent.

Mr. Russell said the three invited Senators would "be afforded a full opportunity to participate and to ask questions."

The Monday session with Mr. Helms will provide the subcommittee with a full briefing on world events, Mr. Russell said, including the intelligence aspects of the war in Vietnam, the turmoil in Communist China and the Rhodesia situation.

61 2 28