

CIA Found Penetrating U.S. Groups

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Senate investigators have gathered evidence that the Central Intelligence Agency has renewed its penetration of educational, religious and cultural groups in the United States as part of its foreign intelligence activities.

The agency's penetration of domestic organizations created a major uproar after exposure of the practice by Ramparts magazine in 1967 and led to the adoption of legislation intended to prevent it from happening again.

However, for the past six months the Senate intelligence committee has been pursuing evidence that the CIA had renewed its connections with domestic organizations. The specific links could not be learned yesterday. In 1967, the agency was discovered to have been funding dozens of labor, farmer, cultural and student organizations through a network of private foundations.

The committee staff is considering conducting public hearings on the issue although the Feb. 29 deadline for completion of the Senate committee's work may not allow sufficient time. The findings will be included in the final report next month.

Senate committee chairman Frank Church (D-Idaho) announced yesterday that he will conduct a joint press conference with staff director William Miller Wednesday to unveil formally proposed legislative solutions to CIA abuses that have been disclosed in congressional hearing rooms and newspapers during the past year.

Church said in a telephone

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interview that he had initiated a series of contacts between White House staff members and his own committee staff on legislative remedies to reform the intelligence community.

The purpose of the consultation, he said, was to determine the "areas of consensus" on intelligence reform between the Senate committee and the Ford administration. "The committee is reserving all its options and so is the executive," Church said. "No one has been co-opted."

At present, the committee and the administration appear to be headed for confrontation on a variety of issues discussed in the consultations between the White House staff and the Senate committee.

These include: congressional influence over covert operations; congressional access to information; control over intelligence budgets; the authority of Congress to declassify information on a unilateral basis; the degree of congressional authority to expel or otherwise punish its own members for disclosure of classified information.

The version of Senate legislation that Church is expected to make public Wednesday reportedly provides for making public intelligence activities that the Senate, by vote in secret session, decides to be improper.

Church has said that he wants the Senate to have authority to find out what is going on "not after the fact but before the fact—particularly when a new and significant covert operation might be planned."

One White House official spoke of "fundamental constitutional differences" between the Senate committee and the administration on the reform legislation—particularly as it bears on congressional initiatives to take a larger share of authority in intelligence oversight.

Rep. Otis G. Pike (D-N.Y.), chairman of the House intelligence committee, is refraining from any contacts

with the White House in drawing up his committee's reform legislation, due to be finished at the end of this month.

Committee staff director Searle Field said the House group had decided to "develop our own proposals uninfluenced by the administration."

Pike and his Democratic colleagues have, on the whole, confronted the administration more aggressively in demanding information than the Church committee, at one point issuing a subpoena to Secretary of State, Henry A. Kissinger for information on covert operations and strategic arms negotiating data. Ultimately, the House committee and the administration reconciled their differences and averted a constitutional showdown.

The issue of penetration of domestic organizations by the CIA was the subject of a closed-door seminar under the auspices of the Council on Foreign Relations in 1968—less than a year after the disclosures that such groups as the National Student Association and American Newspaper Guild were conduits for CIA money.

At that meeting former Deputy Director for Plans Richard Bissell observed that "if the agency is to be effective, it will have to make use of private institutions on an expanding scale, though those relations which have 'blown' cannot be resurrected. . . . We need to operate under deeper cover, with increased attention to the use of 'cut-outs' . . ."

Congress, reacting to the 1967 intelligence scandals, had already barred the use of domestic organizations as conduits for CIA operations abroad.

In another development yesterday Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield said that the CIA and other U.S. intelligence agencies have reduced their combined personnel from 142,000 to 80,000 since 1969—a cut of about 43 per cent.

"It's a trend in the right direction," Mansfield said in an interview.