

CIA Doesn't Like Limits of Privacy Bill

T.P. Agency Wants Secret Hearing to Voice Objections
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By JAMES K. BATTEN

WASHINGTON—The Central Intelligence Agency, in a highly unusual move, has quietly asked the Senate Judiciary Committee to hear its private objections to a bill already reported to the Senate for action.

The bill is a measure designed to safeguard the privacy of government employes from unwarranted intrusions. Among other things, it would limit the use of lie detector and psychiatric tests by all federal agencies, including the CIA.

CIA OFFICIALS, whose identity could not be learned, contacted Sen. James O. Eastland (D-Miss.), the judiciary committee chairman, and Sen. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.), to request a secret hearing on the agency's objections.

Eastland promptly passed along the CIA's request to the other committee members. He also distributed a letter from Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.), opposing an executive session to hear the CIA's case.

Ervin is the principal sponsor of the privacy bill, which was originally slated for Senate debate last week but was withdrawn from the schedule at the last minute.

Ervin's letter to Eastland

warned that recommitment of the bill would "set an unusual precedent." But the North Carolinian said he would be willing to have the CIA testify in a public session.

"I would like to expose before the American people the specious arguments which the Central Intelligence Agency puts forth as reasons for wishing an exemption . . . from the bill."

In an interview, Ervin elaborated his position, arguing that the CIA has come to regard itself as immune from respecting the guarantees of personal freedom contained in the constitution.

"They apparently don't want any law applied to them," he said.

As for the hearings requested by the CIA, Ervin declared, "I'm opposed to secret hearings. It's ridiculous to ask for secret hearings on legislation affecting the rights of Americans."

Twice during committee consideration of the bill, he went on, the CIA was invited to testify. On both occasions, according to Ervin, the invitation was declined.

The super-secret intelligence

agency apparently is most concerned about the privacy bill's limitations on its use of lie detector and psychiatric examinations. Both devices are currently used to screen applicants for jobs at the CIA.

Ervin's original bill prohibited any federal agency, including the CIA and the equally sensitive National Security Agency, from asking any employe or job applicant about his sex life, his religion or his family relationships as part of a lie-detector test.

IN AN AMENDMENT narrowly approved by the judiciary committee, the directors of the CIA and the NSA were permitted to authorize such tests in individual cases where national security was clearly at stake.

Some senators, including Bayh, have considered leading a floor fight to give the CIA and the NSA much broader exemptions from the Ervin bill than those permitted by the committee.

There was speculation on Capitol Hill that the CIA made its unusual move in an effort to avoid an open Senate fight on what it regarded as a sensitive matter.

(Chicago Daily News Service)