

The American Security Council is spending at least \$150,000 to warn voters against the "zero national security" ratings of Sens. Charles Goodell, William Proxmire, Joseph Tydings and other liberals seeking re-election.

Nevertheless, John M. Fisher, the former FBI agent who is the ASC president, says he does not intend to register the Council as a political committee and thereby disclose the source of its funds and expenditures. Fisher says his organization is engaged exclusively in "educational activity."

The Federal Corrupt Practices Act defines a political committee as an "organization which accepts contributions or makes expenditures for the purpose of influencing or attempting to influence the election of candidates (for the House, Senate and presidency) in two or more states."

Such committees, the law says, must file periodic statements with the Clerk of the House, listing all gifts of \$100 or more and describing where the money is going. The next set of reports must be post-marked by October 24.

Is It Political?

A Justice Department expert familiar with ASC's fund raising appeals and its other literature has informally concluded that the Council fits the law's definition and should publicly account for its finances.

Fisher replies that his lawyers disagree. After a lengthy telephone discussion with The Washington Post, the ASC president said he would ask his attorneys to review their position.

According to Fisher, the ASC began mailing the first of 1.5 million letters appealing for funds on Sept. 17. This date would mean that the Council has not yet violated any law since last the report required covers activities through Aug. 31.

The letters carry individual salutations, printed by computer from rented lists of names. The appeal says in part:

"The 1970 elections may be

the most important ever held . . . The results will . . . decide the outcome of the Communist drive for world domination . . . in the face of this clear threat, a coalition of Republican and Democratic Senators and Congressmen have organized to force reductions in our defense budget and abandon Vietnam.

Six Rate 'Zero'

"If these Senators and Congressmen are re-elected, they will have a clear mandate to reduce our military strength further . . . We prepared a National Security Index . . . and the result shows there are 18 Senators who have a National Security Index of zero! Among the zero-rating Senators are . . . Goodell, (Philip) Hart, (Edward) Kennedy, Proxmire, Tydings and (Harrison) Williams."

The letter says "the voter has a clear choice" in two states: California, where John Tunney has a rating of "0" and George Murphy, "100"; and New York, where Goodell and Richard Ottinger "who score 0" are opposed by (James) Buckley, the security-minded Conservative candidate."

The appeal urges "positive action—now, before Election Day" and asks for contributions to "alert all Americans" with "200 full-page newspaper ads, prime time TV spots, distributing millions of Operation Alert folders."

The folder is a three-color leaflet listing House and Senate votes on 10 "national security" issues. Congressmen are given plus marks by voting appropriations for the Internal Security Committee, the ABM, arms to Taiwan and against picketing at the Pentagon. Senators get full marks for voting funds to the C-5A, Subversive Activities Control Board, new manned bomber, ABM and against amendments curbing the use of troops in Cambodia and Vietnam.

White House Mailing

A White House counsel, Charles Colson, has mailed out copies of the brochure to veterans and other groups. His covering memo, written on White House stationery, called the folder "a very interesting analysis."

From his headquarters in Culpeper, Va., Fisher said:

"We're not telling anybody to vote for this person or that person."

ASC, he said simply seeks "a better understanding of for-

Group Earmarks \$150,000 to Defeat Liberals

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eign policy and national security issues. Both Sen. Proxmire and I have a common interest in generating discussion. Members of either house need not be concerned about our activities."

His "Operation Alert," the folder and ad campaign, he said is "not just oriented to the election" and he promised it "will be picking up steam" after November 3.

Fisher declined to say how much the appeal had brought in, a fact he would have to disclose if he filed a report. But there are indications it has not gone as well as he had hoped.

Instead of "200 full-page" ads, ASC has placed just one so far, last week in The Washington Star at a cost of \$3,287.76. Space has been bought for ads next week in the New York Times and Los Angeles Times.

The Council, said Fisher, has also abandoned its plans for a television blitz. But it has distributed about 2.5 million folders with the voting "index."

Fisher estimated the cost of the appeal letter at \$150,000 to \$160,000. Since direct mail experts figure each letter costs about 18 cents, a mailing of 1.5 million should run \$270,000. Moreover, Fisher does not include the outlay for the three-color folder in his calculation.

All From Individuals

He said all the money for the appeal was raised from individual contributions and not from corporations who are forbidden to engage in political activity. A report would verify or invalidate this statement.

The Council, however, does derive a substantial portion of its revenues from "dues" assessed on corporate members.

ASC was established in 1955 in Chicago by such firms as Marshall Field, Sears Roebuck, Stewart Warner and Motorola, largely to build a name

file of "subversives" who would be barred from jobs on government contracts.

From that, the Council branched out to publish a newsletter, run a radio program and direct a "research" center into Communist activity. As far as is known, this is the first time that ASC has publicly indicated a choice between candidates for office.

If the Council is judged a political committee and fails to file, it can be fined \$1,000 and its officers imprisoned for a year. A willful failure to file could bring a fine of \$10,000 and two years in prison.

However, Justice Department authorities could not recall a single case in which the candidate of a major party or a committee had been prosecuted for failing to register.