

Senators Want Tighter Grip on CIA, More Disclosure

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The Senate Intelligence Committee is planning to introduce its own charter for the CIA today after reaching an impasse with the Carter administration.

Of several disagreements the biggest boils down to a question of "executive privilege," according to both administration and congressional sources.

The White House, sources said, is willing to grant Congress the legal rights to demand information about U.S. intelligence activities. Ranking members of the Senate committee consider this crucial to proper oversight of the nation's intelligence agencies. They also want a broader pledge of advance notice of covert operations than President Carter is willing to provide by law.

The senators also want to prohibit the paid use of American academics, journalists and clergymen as intelligence agents. Carter does not want any legislation on the issue beyond perhaps some hortatory language about the importance of maintaining the "independence" of the three professions.

Both sides have agreed to paper

over the differences when Sens. Walter D. Huddleston (D-Ky.) and Charles McC Mathias (R-Md.) introduce a committee-proposed charter for the intelligence community this afternoon. The administration has reportedly agreed to send up a letter voicing its approval of "a vast majority" of the provisions in the bill and expressing confidence that remaining differences can be worked out.

After working for nearly two years on a draft, The White House will not send up a charter of its own but will seek instead to tailor the Senate bill more to its liking. "There is much more agreement than disagreement" between the two sides, said a government lawyer.

The White House and the Senate

committee have agreed on provisions that would:

- Allow the FBI, as part of its counter-intelligence operations in this country, to conduct "black bag jobs" (burglaries) and to open mail in cases involving suspected terrorists or agents of foreign powers. Such activities would be authorized by secret warrants issued by a special court.
- Permit the CIA to conduct, burglarize and carry out wiretaps against Americans abroad—even if they are not suspected of any wrongdoing—to obtain intelligence information the government thinks it should have. These activities would also have to be authorized by the special court.
- End public access to countless CIA and other intelligence agency documents by creating a virtually blanket

exemption in the Freedom of Information Act for operational intelligence files.

• Cut off reporting of covert operations to any congressional committees except the Senate and House Intelligence panels.

Of the three major areas of disagreement, Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Birch Bayh (D-Ind.) says: "We may have a standoff. Then we'll just to have to see where the votes are."

Huddleston said he felt there was still room for an accommodation.

The Senate committee reportedly wants an explicit, statutory right of "full access" to any intelligence agency files. Carter is said to feel this would encroach on his executive powers and does not want an obligation to share government secrets with Congress written into law.

The senators also want "prior notice" of significant covert operations, but the president is opposed to such a rule unless acceptable language providing for exceptions can be drafted. Bayh said yesterday that he felt enough concessions to the administration have been made already and that strong congressional oversight authority was "indispensable."