

# Senate Democrats Favor Special Unit To Look Into C.I.A.

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 14—The Senate Democratic Caucus gave strong support today to the idea of establishing a bipartisan select committee, similar to the one set up after the Watergate break-in, to investigate fully the foreign and domestic activities of the Central Intelligence Agency and all other United States intelligence agencies.

If approved by the full Senate, a step described as inevitable by many Senators after the caucus, the select committee would be making the first detailed Congressional investigation of the C.I.A. since the agency was established in 1947. Republican James R. Schlesinger, the Secretary of Defense, in effect withdrew his characterization of some C.I.A. activities as "misdeeds"—a remark he made to newsmen yesterday after having appeared

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before the Presidential commission investigating allegations of C.I.A. domestic spying.

At a news conference today he said, "Certain actions may have taken place that were regrettable, that were inappropriate, but 'misdeeds' is a legal description, and I probably would prefer to avoid such an expression."

Officially, the caucus voted only to defer until Monday a decision on how to proceed with an inquiry into the C.I.A. But many Senators said that the vote came only after the 60 members of the caucus had rebuffed a plea for a long delay by Senator John C. Stennis, Democrat of Mississippi, whose Senate Armed Services Committee has already announced plans for an investigation into allegations of domestic spying by the C.I.A.

A number of Senators said later that the caucus had expressed overwhelming support for a committee that would investigate all aspects of American domestic and foreign intelligence activities. One underlying reason for the six-day delay, a participant said, was to give Senate leaders a chance to discuss informally with House Speaker Carl Albert

or Chairman the possibility of setting up an ad hoc joint intelligence committee with the House.

## Fight by Stennis

Mr. Stennis, whose power and influence on national security and defense matters in the Senate has rarely been challenged, "fought tooth and nail" as one Senate source put it, to preserve some jurisdiction for his committee. At one point, Senators said, he agreed to broaden the base of his committee to permit members of other committees to participate in the C.I.A. hearings.

After that speech, however, some said, Mr. Stennis was

sharply questioned by Senator William Proxmire, Democrat of Wisconsin, who has emerged as a leading critic of the intelligence agency's domestic activities.

He asked whether Mr. Stennis, as chairman of the Senate Intelligence Subcommittee, knew about secret C.I.A. subsidies to opponents of the late President of Chile, Salvador Gossens Allende. Senator Stennis replied no, according to participants.

Senator Proxmire also asked if Mr. Stennis knew of the alleged C.I.A. domestic activities before the reports were published last month? Again, participants said, Mr. Stennis said no.

## Speech by Church

Earlier, Senator Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho, made what one eyewitness characterized as a "very strong speech," telling his Democratic colleagues that he was convinced that his subcommittee investigating the C.I.A.'s involvement in Chile had been "deceived" by testimony from officials of the agency in 1972. Mr. Church said that testimony raised a "serious question of perjury," one senator said.

In other developments today, two members of the House, Elizabeth Holtzman, Democrat of Brooklyn, and John L. Burton, Democrat of California, introduced a resolution of inquiry calling on President Ford to provide "full and complete information" concerning possible illegal C.I.A. domestic spying. Under House rules, the resolution of inquiry can be called up for a floor vote if not acted upon by the Judiciary Committee within a week.

Representative Michael J. Harrington, Democrat of Massachusetts, urged the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to permit him to testify in opposition to the pending nomination of Harry W. Shlaudeman to be Ambassador to Venezuela. Mr. Harriman, in a letter to Senator John J. Sparkman, the committee, said that Mr. Shlaudeman was involved in "the deception of Congress" during testimony last year about C.I.A. activities in Chile. Mr. Shlaudeman, now a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, served in Chile during a period when the C.I.A. was operating against the Government of President Allende, who was overthrown.

## Calls Acts Inappropriate

At his Pentagon news conference, Mr. Schlesinger said there "were a number of activities" conducted by C.I.A. officials in the last 20 years that were "inappropriate" and "are to be regretted."

"Whether or not they were illegal is a question that I would prefer to leave to the lawyers," he added. "I think that in relation to historical standards that there were not activities in such number or so surprising as to be a source of National turmoil."

It was while serving as Director of Central Intelligence in 1973 that Mr. Schlesinger discovered the agency's domestic operations, well-informed Government sources have told The New York Times, and moved to put a stop to them.

On Dec. 22, The Times reported that the C.I.A. maintained files on 10,000 American citizens and had conducted "dozens" of illegal operations inside the United States in connection with its activities against suspected foreign espionage agents.

Asked about the reported file-keeping on 10,000 citizens, Mr. Schlesinger restated the question this way:

"The question, I think, is directed toward massive surveillance activities in the United States and to the extent that that is tied to 10,000 files, that story is overblown."

## Surveillance Not Reported

The Times did not quote its sources as saying, either in its initial dispatch on the C.I.A. or in later dispatches, that the agency had maintained domestic surveillance on 10,000 citizens.

The Democratic Caucus's action to consolidate the inquiries into the C.I.A. and other intelligence agencies comes at a time when four Senate committees or subcommittees have begun preparations for hearings into the alleged C.I.A. involvement.

The Senate Appropriations

Subcommittee on Intelligence has summoned William E. Colby, the Director of Central Intelligence, to a closed hearing tomorrow morning on those allegations. The next day, Mr. Colby is to testify before Mr. Stennis's subcommittee. Next week he will appear before the Foreign Relations Committee.

In addition, a subcommittee on government operations, headed by Senator Edmund S. Muskie, Democrat of Maine, began hearings late last year into the broad area of intelligence and its Congressional and executive overview.

A number of Senators said that the move to set up a select committee could only be interpreted as a distinct setback for Mr. Stennis.

## Saw Gap in Responsibility

One eyewitness said after today's caucus that there had been agreement that those who have had the "overwhelming responsibility" for watching the C.I.A. had not done it.

Earlier in the day, Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana, the majority leader, called for a single investigation by a bipartisan panel similar to the Watergate committee.

"The investigation of the C.I.A. should be undertaken by one Senate group, not many," he said. "The Senate can no longer evade its responsibility for being conversant with the mechanisms of intelligence-gathering, which have been set up and which operate largely in secrecy."

Another question needs to be asked, too, Mr. Mansfield added—"What has been the effect of the operations in the world on the reputation which was once this nation's among all peoples, for decency, integrity, honest dealing and compassionate human concern?"

The House Democratic Caucus rejected yesterday an attempt by some liberals to create a similar investigating committee, leaving its inquiry instead to the House Intelligence Subcommittee headed by Representative Lucien N. Nedzi, Democrat of Michigan. Mr. Nedzi also has summoned Mr. Colby to testify at hearings starting next week.