

House Intelligence Unit in Quandary

Search for Director Holds Up Investigation of CIA Activities

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The House Select Committee on Intelligence Operations has been in business for more than nine weeks, but its only staff member is a security director who, so far, has nothing to guard.

The arrival of top-secret documents from the Central Intelligence Agency and elsewhere in the government and the start of the House investigation have been held up by a prolonged search for someone to run it.

"We have moved rapidly ahead," quipped Rep. Don Edwards (D-Calif.), a committee member, "and after nine weeks, we have decided to hire a staff directors."

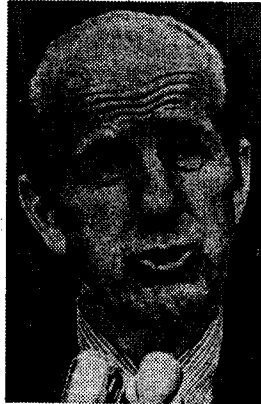
The House established the committee to investigate allegations of illegal or improper activities by the CIA and other government intelligence agencies.

Four lawyers are under consideration for the directorship. Two of them—Chicago lawyer Thomas P. Sullivan and Deputy State Attorney General Kenneth P. Zauber of New Jersey—have not been interviewed.

The other two lawyers under consideration are Searle Field, a former legislative aide to Sen. Lowell P. Weicker Jr. (R-Conn.), and Ted Jacobs, a long-time associate of consumer advocate Ralph Nader and a counsel at the Center for the Study of Responsive Law.

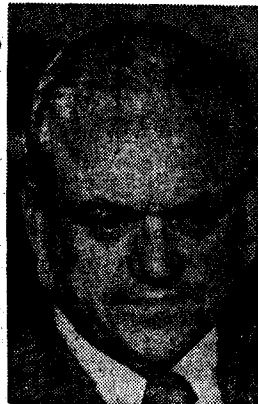
Some committee members are embarrassed by the delay in selecting a director. Their frustration seems heightened by the apparent determination of other members to wait for a candidate more to their liking.

"I'm a little unhappy with the speed with which the committee has moved," said Rep. Robert N. Giamo (D-Conn.), a key member in the seven-member Democratic majority. "The thing that bothers me is whether this is an indication of things to come." (The Democratic members will meet Monday in an effort to break the logjam over the directorship.)



REP. ROBERT McCLORY

... lead House committee's search for staff director.



REP. LUCIEN NEDZI

Committee Chairman Lucien N. Nedzi (D-Mich.) had hoped for near-unanimous backing for a director, but that has proved an elusive goal.

"It's still up in the air," said Rep. Robert McClory (R-Ill.), the committee's ranking Republican. "I would not want to say we're close to selecting anyone."

Several candidates were considered last month for the job. One fell through, reportedly because he was being considered for a post at the Justice Department; another dropped out of consideration because he couldn't cut ties with his Washington law practice.

Overtures were made to former assistant Watergate special prosecutor Richard Ben-Veniste. He told the committee he wasn't interested.

"The selection is overdue," an aide to Nedzi said. "The trouble is, some of these lawyers they're talking about are making over \$100,000 a year." The House post is expected to pay \$36,000.

Still the Senate committee investigating the CIA and other areas of the government's intelligence community appointed a staff director and a chief counsel within a month of being es-

tablished and now has about 50 staff members.

Some Democrats on the House committee question Nedzi's determination to push the investigation.

"He should have been able to come up with a staff director in less than 2½ months," said one. "Is this what we're going to do the rest of the time? What we're really worried about is how seriously Lucien wants to push this thing."

Another concern, as one member of Congress put it, is "the fact that nobody's beating a path to our door. Is it because you can't do a good job in this area, because it's doomed to failure? Or is there a feeling among lawyers that you don't mess with these guys? And I don't mean the CIA so much, I'm talking about the FBI and the IRS. Some older lawyers have said to me, 'Are you crazy? These guys would be haunting me for the rest of my life.'"

Nedzi's appointment Feb. 19 as chairman of the committee drew criticism because he is chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Intelligence.

In a brief floor speech the next day, Rep. Michael Harrington (D-Mass.) protested that Nedzi's appointment would add "to the pervasive public cynicism about the

seriousness of Congress in this and other endeavors."

Nedzi has indicated that he considers such talk unjustified and has tried to ignore it. The new committee has kept a low profile, holding only one session.

Committee Democrats and Republicans have met separately to interview candidates for the top staff position.

Reps. David C. Treen (R-La.) and Robert W. Kasten Jr. (R-Wis.) said they are satisfied thus far with Nedzi's efforts to find a chief counsel acceptable to all.

"We're not going to get a perfect guy, let's face it," said Kasten. "But there isn't any perfect congressman, either."

There seems to be a widespread conviction among the House committee members that their investigation will be more thorough than the Senate committee's. This feeling seems to be based on the committee members' diverse political interests and the near certainty that the House Committee will have the last turn at bat.

Meanwhile, the House panel's chief of security, Carl H. Sims, a retired Army officer who did similar work during the House impeachment inquiry, has kept busy with plans for burglar alarms, security sensors, and a document control system aimed at preventing information leaks. The documents themselves have not yet been requested.