

CIA's Supporters in Congress Rally Behind Youth Program



Associated Press
PHILIP WERDELL
... reveals CIA threats

By J. Y. Smith
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Supporters of the Central Intelligence Agency marshalled support on Capitol Hill yesterday in an attempt to justify the Agency's secret penetration of American youth groups.

Chairman L. Mendel Rivers (D-S.C.) of the House Armed Services Committee and Rep. William H. Bates of Massachusetts, the Committee's ranking Republican, issued a statement in which they praised the CIA for giving millions of dollars in covert aid to the National Student Association beginning in 1952.

"Espionage was not involved—the survival of freedom was," the statement said.

The Agency would have failed in its duty had it not made it possible for NSA members to combat Communist efforts to take over international youth forums, it continued.

Rivers and Bates met with newsmen after the Armed Services subcommittee which deals with CIA affairs had held a closed meeting with Richard Helms, the Agency's Director, and other officials. The Congressmen are among those who last year blocked moves to broaden Congressional supervision of the CIA.

They said the link between the Agency and the NSA had been known to every Administration since 1952 and known to the Armed Services subcommittee for several years.

The praise from Rivers and Bates was echoed by conservative Sen. John G. Tower (R-Tex.) in remarks to the Young Republican Leadership Conference.

"For myself, I can see no reason why the United States should apologize for helping send students to international conferences as voices for the free world," Towers said.

'Tragic . . . Comical'

But Sen. J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.), the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said the "whole thing is tragic as well as comical" in view of last year's efforts to set up a select committee to oversee the CIA.

Calling for "tighter supervision" of the Agency, Fulbright added: "It is incredible that the President didn't know about it. I certainly didn't know about it."

The Senator also said that the CIA had assured him that it had not "secretly subsidized or used Fulbright Scholars" who were studying abroad.

At the State Department, it was announced that the 3-man panel President Johnson appointed Wednesday to make "a careful review of any Government activities" that could endanger "the integrity and independence of the educational community" had begun its deliberations.

The panel is headed by Acting Secretary of State Nicholas deB. Katzenbach and includes Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare John W. Gardner and Director Helms.

Department press spokesman Robert J. McCloskey said the meeting was "both an effort to clarify the present situation and to suggest sensible courses of future action." He

added that he did not expect to be able to announce future panel sessions.

Meanwhile, the NSA's 10-man supervisory board held a day-long meeting in the International Inn to consider its future. The session broke up and reconvened in another room down the hall at one point when members decided that the room they had been occupying was bugged with listening devices.

Philip Werdell, who has been acting as spokesman for the board, accused the CIA of attempting to intimidate NSA leaders who revealed the organization's tie-up with the CIA.

The CIA has intimidated them with personal threats ranging from character assassination to placing pressure upon the Establishment to reject them from responsible roles in American society," Werdell said.

Ten Hershey Comments

The NSA board decided to sever completely its ties with the CIA, suspend its foreign representatives and freeze all funds identified as coming from CIA sources.

In another development, Lt. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey, the Selective Service Director, said in an interview with the Associated Press that he remembers "talking to some NSA men" but added that he did not recall what they said.

He was commenting on an article in Ramparts Magazine which said that NSA officials were given draft deferments for "an occupation vital to the national interest."

"I don't think you would ever find me saying I am going to take care of somebody," Hershey said.