

Inouye Sees Brief Tenure In Hill Chair

By George Lardner Jr.

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Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii) has decided to quit as chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee after perhaps two more years on the job. He said in an interview that he doesn't want to make a career of having the nation's intelligence agencies whisper their secrets to him. He thinks it would be bad for the country and bad for him.

"I'm afraid if you stay on too long in this job, you either go a little off," Inouye said, wagging a finger at his head, "or you become a part of the institutions, the intelligence establishment. Either way is wrong."

The permanent select committee was created seven months ago to monitor the Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence-gathering activities of other government agencies after lengthy congressional investigations of their misdeeds.

Inouye said he expects the committee to make a lot of mistakes and false starts next year in the effort to establish a smoothly functioning system of oversight and budgetary control.

"But if I can get it running smoothly the year after that," he said, "bingo; I quit."

Inouye said he might be persuaded to remain as chairman for four years at most, but in any case, he said he hopes his quick retirement will set a pattern for his successors.

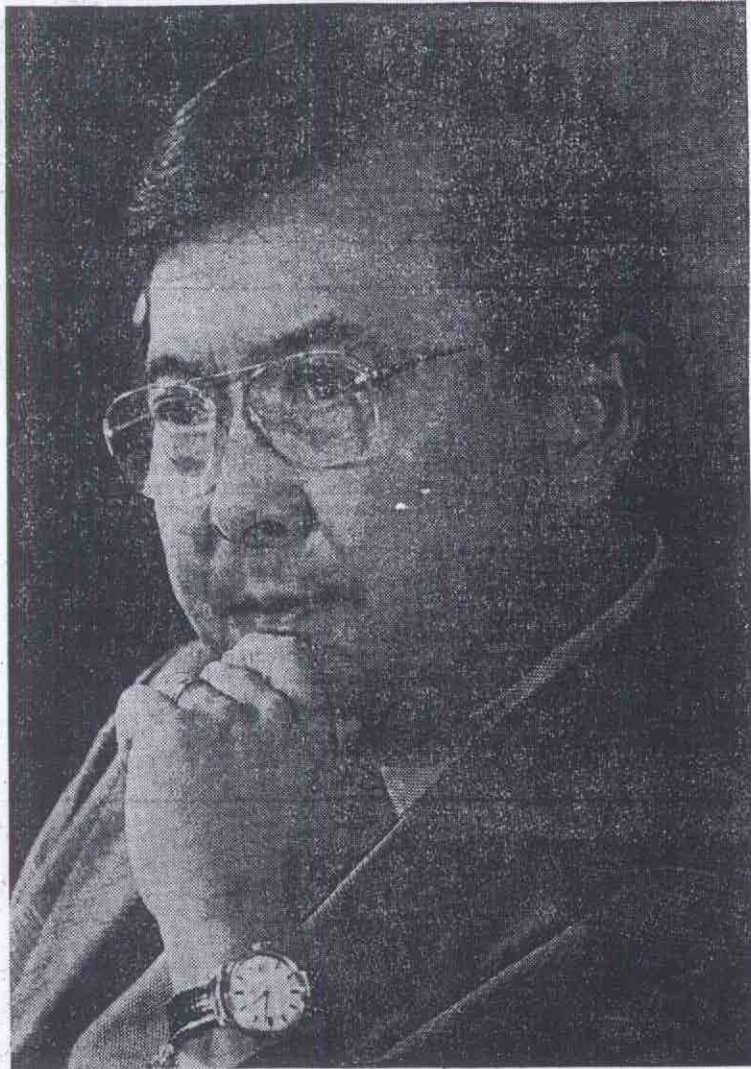
"If I can establish this as a precedent, then the next guy will be almost forced to do the same thing," Inouye said. "Whoever is chairman should be free to stay longer if he wants, but if he does, I think he's asking for real trouble."

Elaborating on the frustrations of the chairmanship, Inouye said that from a purely political vantage point, this is a minus assignment.

"First, you can't talk about it," he said. "We get all kinds of information. If I were an intelligence professional, I could get it off my chest by talking to other professionals, but in this job, I can't even discuss it with my wife. I don't think that's a good thing. It's not healthy for a man to be in this business too long."

"Secondly," Inouye continued, "I have missed, I'd say, about 50 roll call votes because of this assignment—mostly procedural matters, motions to table, things like that."

Often, he said, he can't even explain the reasons for his absence, which have ranged from a secret meeting out of town with someone involved in



By James E. W. Atherton—The Washington Post

Sen. Daniel Inouye believes Intelligence Committee chairmanship should revolve

intelligence matters to hush-hush visits with Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger.

"So what happens is that your attendance record goes down and people say, 'That son of a gun is playing hooky.'"

For the year ahead, Inouye said the committee will give top priority to the duty given it by the Senate of developing a system of spending ceilings and conditions for the intelligence agencies. Among the issues that must be resolved are questions about how detailed the intelligence community budget should be and how much, if any of it should be publicly disclosed.

The 17-member committee is also working to produce written intelligence-agency guidelines and charters by next July 1 in light of shortcomings spotlighted by the 1975-76 investigations.

At present, the Inouye committee is

investigating reports that the CIA has been carrying out questionable spywork in the Pacific islands of Micronesia.

Staffers are also conducting preliminary inquiries into clandestine activities in the United States of the intelligence agencies of several "friendly" foreign governments, including Chile, South Korea and Iran, and into the 1976 murder of Mafia figure John Rosselli, a witness before the interim Senate intelligence committee last year.

Although the committee has held few public hearings thus far, Inouye said its members have received a number of budgetary briefings. He said he has also "just about forced" committee members to travel in this country and abroad during the recess "to inform themselves as much as possible about the intelligence commu-

nity."

"All of us are babes in the woods, every one of us," Inouye said of the committee. "We're feeling our way. All of us have been a bit overwhelmed at times by the information shared with us."
