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CIA Post:

More Tension

The Senate's refusal to accept Theodore Sorensen as the nation's intelligence chief has raised more questions than it answered, pointing not to a quick resolution of a nasty affair but a further period of tension between Congress and the new President.

Although the Sorensen fiasco guarantees that Democratic senators will insist on advance consultation for the CIA second choice, Jimmy Carter is so irritated by rejection of the first choice that he may not be inclined to be helpful.

Beyond such personal factors lies the possibility that Carter really does contemplate basic changes in the very nature of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). If so, Ted Sorensen was not an aberration but a foretaste of bitter struggle.

When transition chief Jack Watson, then at the peak of his short-lived power, decided on Sorensen as the intelligence chief and sold him to Carter, the word was passed to Senate Democratic chieftains as final. Moreover, several key members of the Senate Intelligence Committee were not even given advance notice of the Sorensen choice.

"That's not going to be allowed to happen again," one liberal Democrat on the Intelligence Committee told us. With other Democrats, he was gratified at the ease with which Senate Democrats imposed their will on the new administration.

Carter aides agree the Senate has no intention of letting lack of consultation happen again. But based on their deeper knowledge about Jimmy Carter, these aides feel he will be loath to depend on Senate guidance for his new CIA director precisely because of the gratification shown in the Senate over Sorensen's defeat. "Jimmy will be even less inclined to consult now that he's lost one," a high Carter operative told us.

Thus, the road to the CIA is newly mined with booby traps planted in the wake of the Sorensen disaster. The Senate, having drawn the first blood from Carter, is in no mood to roll over for him now, and the new President is in no mood to crawl to the Senate.

Carter's only sure way to avoid trouble would be a CIA director from the ranks of Congress itself. Out of half a dozen top prospects now being considered, there is one congressman—Richardson Preyer, a moderate liberal from North Carolina highly regarded by Carter.

One liberal Democratic member of the commit-

tee has quietly suggested to the Carter White House another possible way of avoiding trouble: draft James Schlesinger and let someone else take over energy problems.

Schlesinger ran the CIA for five months in early 1973 and gained a reputation as a tough, even ruthless, administrator, despised by many CIA professionals. But intimates say not even a presidential draft could lure Schlesinger back to Langley.

Another deceptively obvious option for Carter is Paul Warnke, who, despite ardent support for nuclear arms control progress, would be acceptable in the CIA to many conservative Republicans. But Warnke's friends say he would no more accept the CIA job than he would an earlier offer from Carter to run the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA).

"Paul was led up to the mountaintop by Carter," a Warnke admirer told us, "with the implied promise of becoming Secretary of Defense. Instead, they offered him ACDA—not even cabinet-level." He turned it down.

All such discussion of possible candidates Carter may or may not choose begs this deeper question: How much was Carter's choice of Sorensen based on a conscious effort to remove the CIA from control by the intelligence community and put it into a different mold, effectively ending its foreign operations and forcing it to shed all remnants of the cold war era?

Some non-political experts are convinced this was indeed Carter's desire. "Jimmy Carter does not understand the function of American intelligence," one expert told us. The Sorensen fiasco has led members of the Senate committee to a similar conclusion, buttressed by Sorensen's statement to the committee that Carter chose him precisely because he was cut from such different cloth.

That is another reason the committee will now insist on full consultation on Carter's next nominee. A majority now fears that the choice goes far beyond personality and experience, that it is tied in to a dangerous effort by Carter to change the nature of the intelligence game.

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