

'Who Else Is on the Watch?'

FBI Terrorism Funds Split Lawmakers

5/14/78
By Walter Pincus

Washington Post Staff Writer

A congressional fight is developing over how much additional money, above President Carter's fiscal 1979 budget request, the Federal Bureau of Investigation should be given to combat terrorism.

Behind the money battle is a conflict between legislators who want to revive the FBI's domestic intelligence operation, targeted against alleged terrorists, and those who fear the revival could spark new abuses.

The Carter administration had recommended a cut of \$3.6 million, or 30 percent, in the bureau's domestic security and terrorism investigations program. It said the reduction was justified by a decline in cases resulting from new guidelines issued by the attorney general and from the transfer of Communist Party cases to the foreign counterintelligence section.

On April 26, however, a House Appropriations subcommittee voted to raise Carter's request by \$6.7 million. It specifically approved reinstatement of the \$3.6 million for the domestic se-

curity and terrorism program, and said the remainder was for Washington headquarters coordination of investigations, including those associated with terrorism.

As a counter to the House action, Sen. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.) plans to offer an amendment during the Judiciary Committee's consideration of the FBI's fiscal 1979 authorization that would direct an additional \$2 million to be spent on terrorism, but not under the domestic security and terrorism program.

Bayh, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee and a member of the Judiciary Committee, would allocate \$1 million for criminal investigations involving terrorists. The other \$1 million would go to headquarters coordination.

Bayh, according to one informed source, is concerned that the FBI is trying to get its "domestic intelligence operation back on track. They see a juicy target with terrorism and they think Congress will go to bat for them."

Opponents of additional funds for the domestic security program fear

that the FBI would be tempted to open cases on the basis of suspicion, rather than facts, congressional sources said yesterday. They argue that this could lead to the kind of abuses exposed by Congress and the press in recent years.

But proponents of extra spending fear that not enough attention is being paid to potential terrorism. This feeling was summed up during House subcommittee hearings by Rep. Joseph D. Early (D-Mass.), who asked FBI director William H. Webster, "Who else is aware and on the watch for terrorism and domestic security investigations?"

Webster said at those hearings that he had "very serious questions" about the cuts. Admitting that the case load had been cut "from several thousand to about a hundred," he said those remaining were "the tough cases that involve terrorism, bombing and massive violence."

At the time, however, he did not propose additional funding. But by the time he testified before the Senate, he said openly that the funds were needed.