## Return Of Data

## Sought

Conflict Erupts Over 4 Words in

Reports on War

By George Lardier Jr.

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Acting on orders from the President, the administration yesterday demanded the rearm of all classified documents from the House Committee on Intelligence and vowed to produce no more such information unless the committee stops asserting the right to make it public.

The confrontation, which abruptly halted the committee's investigation of the performance of government intelligence agencies in various international crises, erupted over the declassification of portions of a top-secret study showing the agents were "starkly wrong" about the 1973 Arab-Israeli war.

The committee, headed by Rep. Otis G. Pike (D.N.Y.), voted Thursday afternoon in closed session to make public a series of mistaken predictions and conclusions by U.S. intelligence experts. Several segments were deleted at the request of Central Intelligence Agency Director; William E. Colby and other officials, but the committee refused to suppress one four word phrase that Colby also wanted to keep secret.

CIA officials had claimed that release of those, four words could jeonardize US intelligence methods and sources, but committee members disagreed by a vote of 8 to 3.

Dispatched by the White House to what proved a tense, acrimonious hearing yesterday morning, Assistant Attoriney General Rex E. Lee denounced the committee's action as "unprecedented" and

"unconstitutional." He maintained the committee had no right to declassify government documents on its own and said the decision was causing "serious and irreparable harm to the national security and foreign relations of the United States."

Pike interrupted him repeatedly in scornful, indignant tones, demanding to know who had sent Lee to testify "on behalf of the executive branch" and sharply challenging his claims that declassifying government documents "is not a legislative function."

The four word phrase at issue was not disclosed during the debate, although Lee said at one point in his prepared statement that it dealt with "certain foregin communication intelligence activities of the United States government."

Sources close to the CIA indicated later that the dispute involved a phrase in a Defense Intelligence Agency summary on Oct. 6, 1973, that alluded to the mobilization of troops in Egypt "and greater communication security" which had been imposed. The sources said the four quoted words showed that the United States

See PIKE, A5, Col. E

## PIKE, rom AT

had the ability to intercept Egyptian communications despite Cairo's security precautions.

Pike and other committee members said they still saw no reason for keeping the offending phrase secret and Pike said it was "not any more revelatory than a lot of other words" that the CIA and other intelligence agency representatives elections.

Initially they had claimed that release of Defense Intelligence Agency summary dated Oct. 3, 1973—saying that "the movement of Syrian troops add. Egyptian military readings are considered to be coincidental and not designed to lead to major hospitalities"—would also jeopardize U.S. intelligence "sources and methods." But they dropped that claim at Thursday afternoon's executive session.

Sticking to his prepared text despite a barrage of questions, Lee maintained that the committee's release of the four other words "stands as a sharp departure from the traditional manner of handling classified information to accommodate the respective constitutional responsibilities of the executive and legislative branches."

"What is the traditional manner?" Pike demanded.
Lee said it was the delivery of documents to congressional

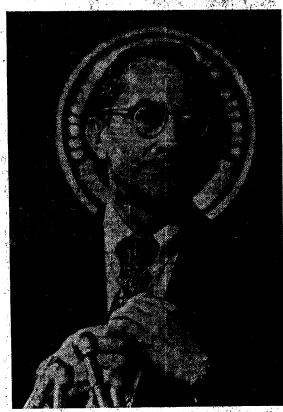
of documents to congressional committees for secret inspection only. Making such information public, he declared, "may be done by the executive branch" and at times by the

## Britain, Iceland Split on Fishery

REYKJAVIK, Sept. 12— Talks between Britain and Icefand on new fishing rights eneded in deadlock here yesterday, raising fears of a new cod war between the two conbries.

Britain wants Iceland to accept the present fisheries agreement between them as a basis of a new pact, but Iceland rejects this.

The agreement, which expires Nov. 13, ended the socalled cod war resulting from Iceland's extension of its fishing limites from 12 to 50 miles in 1972. Iceland has ecreed a new 200-mile limit, which coo force on Oct. 15.



is Larry Morris-The Washington Post

CIA Director Colby speaks at a news conference.

courts, but, he assertted, "that is not a legislative function under the separation of powers."

We are asking for a return to that traditional approach," Lee added in clipped tones moments later, declaring that it had been honored for dec-

Pike exploded. "That's exactly what's wrong, Mr. Lee," he exclaimed leaning into a microphone. "For decades, other committees of the Congress have not done their jobs and you've loved it in the executive branch. You come up here and whisper in one friendly congressman's ear, and in my opinion that's why we're in the mes we're in: That's exactly what you want to continue."

Pike maintained that the House resolution creating the committee-and the rules the committee later adoptedboth make clear that it has the right to declassify governments documents as it deems necessary.

The assistant attorney genhadn't read the rules of either the House or the committee, having just been drawn into White House Counsel Philip W. Buchen. Lee insisted, however, that the committee's action was a violation of the separation-of-powers doctrine

Accordingly, he declared that President Ford's responsibilities "leave him no alternative but to request the immediate return of all classified materials" provided the House Reminded that he had already committee so far. He said Mr. said the phrase dealt with Ford would also direct all gov ernment agencies to withhold any other classified informainterviews, "until the committee satisfactorily alters its position."

congressional oversight of gov- would agree to editing, para-

ernment operations would be impossible if only the executive branch could decideded what to make secret and what to make public.

"In other words, the executive branch is telling this committee of the House it may not continue to operate," the New York Democrat declared. He told reporters later that the committee's investigations would have to be halted, at least temporarily.

The committee is expected to meet next week to decide the next move. Pike said that he felt it could win a court fight over the issue, but that the administration knows the committee would be reluctant to start one because it has a congressionally imposed deadline of Jan. 31 to finish its investigations.

"We are operating under a time constraint and they know it," Pike said. "They have enjoyed the tactics of delay." At an unusual news conference later at CIA headquar-

ters at McLean, CIA Director William E. Colby was asked whether the four words justified the confrontation between the White House and the Con-

"I certainly think these four words are worth it," Colby replied. He said "the particular kind of material Justice Department's Civil Division, acknowledged that he intelligence" which is endowed with specific statutory safeguards.

The CIA director maintainhaving just been drawn into ed that disclosure of the the case the night before by phrase would enable experts of the country involved to "go back to the date," examine their own machinery at the time and determine "if there are gaps in their ability to keep secrets."

Colby acknowledged that these experts "may well spot the phrase easily now, but he refused to disclose it because 'I don't want to help them." said the phrase dealt with "communications intelligence," the CIA director said he was still "not going to distion, including testimony and cuss the specifics of the four words."

He added that he hoped a settlement could be reached Pike protested that effective whereby committee members



Witnesses, from left, Keith Clark of the CIA; William G. Hyland of State Department; Assistant Attorney Gen-

eral Lee, and deputy assistant attorney general Irwin Goldbloom hear testimony at House intelligence hearings.

hrasing and "changing words that the White House ordered answer directly and would say House committee members in lightly" in the future.

Asked whether he had processed the cutoff of secrets Buchen, Colby refused to fered Thursday to meet with interested in my presence."