

House Leak Probe Poses

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The House vote Thursday ordering an investigation of the leak of the intelligence report is variously viewed by members as a necessary defense of House integrity or a chilling threat to freedom of the press.

It may turn out to be also a big headache for the House ethics committee, which was directed to find out how CBS correspondent Daniel Schorr, who gave the report to the Village Voice in New York, obtained it.

The committee has jurisdiction only over members and employees of the House, and the resolution does not appear to have broadened its jurisdiction to cover television reporters. Also, the committee has no investigative staff. "They don't know where they're at," said Majority Leader Thomas P. O'Neill (D-Mass.) yesterday.

The committee will meet Tuesday to try to find out.

"The mood of the House is that anyone who leaks secrets about national security is in trouble," said O'Neill. "They won't stand for it."

The House took Thursday's highly unusual action because the CIA report was leaked to Village Voice as a direct reaction to the House vote on Jan. 29 ordering that the report not be released until the President certified that it contained no classified information whose publication would be harmful to U.S. intelligence activities.

Sponsored by Rep. Sam Stratton (D-N.Y.) and passed 269 to 115, the resolution's "whereas" clauses state that Schorr's actions "may be in contempt of, or a breach of the privileges of, this house." The resolving clause, the only part of the resolution with legal force, directs the ethics committee to "inquire into the circumstances surrounding the publication of the text," but makes no mention of Schorr.

Rep. Richard Ichord (D-Mo.) said the inquiry was necessary to "protect the in-

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tegrity and the process of the House"—Meaning to prevent reports from being leaked and published after a House vote to forbid it.

Stratton insisted that press freedom was not involved.

But Rep. Don Edwards (D-Calif.) warned that by naming Mr. Schorr, there is a very large and dangerous chilling effect on the right of reporters to receive information."

Conceivably, the inquiry

could lead to House action against Schorr for contempt of the House or could strip him of credentials to use the congressional television galleries. Stratton said he believed Schorr had committed a contemptuous act by leaking the report. Rep. William F. Walsh (R-N.Y.) wrote to Speaker Carl Albert and to the committee of TV gallery correspondents asking that they take away Schorr's gallery card.

who has already been identified," Stratton contended. O'Neill said the House should leave any question of disciplining Schorr to his colleagues in the TV gallery. He also urged referring the investigation question to the House Rules Committee but the House rejected this, apparently afraid the inquiry would be buried there. Not in the memory of any press gallery official has House or Senate ever taken any action to punish a reporter.

Several members said any inquiry should be aimed primarily at the unidentified leaker who gave the intelligence committee's secret report to Schorr in the first place. Stratton replied that he would like to have that name, but that leakers are hard to find unless they confess. The House should proceed with an investigation "of what seems to me to be very flagrant and contemptuous conduct of somebody

who has already been identified," Stratton contended.

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