

Nedzi Quitting CIA Unit

Fight Centers On Harrington, Agency Critic

By George Gardner Jr.
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Rep. Lucien N. Nedzi (D-Mich.) decided to resign as chairman of the House intelligence committee yesterday after renewed infighting over its investigation of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Under fire from restive committee Democrats dissatisfied with his leadership, Nedzi turned in a letter of resignation to Speaker Carl Albert (D-Okla.) yesterday afternoon, but the controversy remains unsettled and threatens to spill over onto the House floor next week.

Declaring that he had been left with nothing but "a gavel and a title," Nedzi said his decision was final, but he agreed to postpone the issue until Monday at Albert's request.

The controversy, which could jeopardize the entire House investigation, resulted in the abrupt cancellation yesterday morning of public questioning of CIA Director William E. Colby. He had been called to testify on the post-Watergate discovery within the agency of various illegal and improper activities.

The House committee's three Republicans boycotted the meeting at Nedzi's request and it had to be called off under rules requiring the presence of at least one GOP member. Colby and his aides picked up their briefcases and returned to CIA headquarters at Langley without testifying.

The infighting revolved around Rep. Michael J. Harrington (D-Mass.), an outspoken critic of the CIA whom Nedzi had passed over, despite seniority, in setting up a sepa-

rate subcommittee to investigate the agency.

The committee's Democratic majority rebelled against Nedzi last week, amid disclosures that he had been briefed by the CIA more than a year ago about the agency's involvement in assassination plots and other misdeeds and took no action on the information.

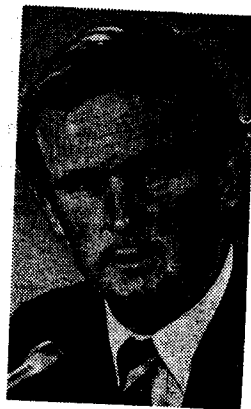
The six Democrats initially called for Nedzi's resignation, but under a compromise hammered out with the House Democratic leadership, agreed instead to the formation of a separate CIA subcommittee under Rep. James V. Stanton (D-Ohio).

The compromise fell apart Wednesday in a sharp dispute over the subcommittee's makeup. Nedzi's four appointments ignored Democratic seniority on the full committee and left out both Harrington and Rep. Ronald V. Dellums (D-Calif.), another outspoken critic of the CIA.

As one member put it, this shattered "the fragile veneer of accommodation" holding the compromise together. Led by Rep. Robert N. Giaimo (D-Conn.), the Democratic committee members protested to Nedzi at a caucus Wednesday afternoon. When he refused to yield, they voted 6 to 1 to enlarge the subcommittee and to adopt House Democratic caucus rules that would have forced Nedzi to carry out the decision and to take seniority into account.

At a final meeting with House Democratic Caucus Chairman Philip Burton (Calif.) Wednesday night, Nedzi proposed to put Del-

See CIA, A6, Col. 1



REP. HARRINGTON

... omitted from panel

CIA, From A1

lums on the subcommittee. Dellums and the other Democrats refused the offer and voted instead to have all 10 members of the full committee double as members of the CIA-subcommittee headed by Stanton.

"I think the contract's out on Mike Harrington," Dellums told reporters, pointing out that Harrington outranks him in terms of seniority. "We're supposed to be the liberal left wing on the committee, but we're not the Gold Dust twins."

Nedzi said he finally decided to resign yesterday morning instead of taking part in what he called a "gavel switching" operation.

Defending his choices for the subcommittee, Nedzi said he picked the members "who, I thought from their interests and energy, would do a responsible job" in investigating the CIA.

The subcommittee Nedzi originally picked included Stanton, Giaimo, freshman Morgan Murphy (D-Ill.), and

David Treer (R-La.). Nedzi and the ranking Republican on the full committee, Robert McClory (Ill.) would also have had votes as ex-officio members.

Both Giaimo and Dellums called it a clear effort to keep Harrington off the CIA subcommittee. Dellums also cited an action by the House Armed Services Committee Tuesday as evidence of a concerted anti-Harrington campaign by the congressional establishment.

Despite House rules granting every member access to any committee's files, the Armed Services Committee voted to deny Harrington access to its secret records, charging that he leaked secret testimony last year on CIA operations against the late Chilean President Salvador Allende. Harrington has denied leaking the information.

For his part, Nedzi said he felt he had been put in "an intolerable position" and intends to leave the committee entirely. He said it would take a vote of the House to accept his resignation, but could not

envision being forced to stay on against his will.

The Michigan Democrat also said he thought it would be "preferable" for Albert to name an outsider as chairman "simply because of the chemistry that exists within the committee." He pointed out that it took three months to get majority agreement on a staff director.

Asked whether the committee might be dissolved and a new one appointed, Nedzi smiled and said, "that's an appealing course of action." He said Speaker Albert did not give him any reason for postponing a planned farewell speech until Monday, but "obviously someone wants to think through the problem."

Another Michigan Democrat, Rep. James G. O'Hara, had been carrying around a speech in his pocket yesterday calling for other Democrats on the committee to step down along with Nedzi.

CIA Director Colby spent some 15 minutes waiting before the Stanton subcommittee yesterday morning before

Stanton announced that the hearing could not be held because "the Republican members have decided not to participate."

Speaking with reporters later, Stanton confirmed telling a reporter for the Cleveland Plain Dealer that the CIA had been involved in a successful assassination, but he declined to give any details or to indicate how direct that involvement has been.

Colby agreed to stand by for a return visit next week, but voiced reservations when Harrington asked that he supply the CIA materials for the hearing in advance so members could study them. When the CIA director said that most of the documents would have to be kept at Langley, for inspection there, until "secrecy agreements" and other arrangements were nailed down, Harrington asked whether "the committee or Mr. Colby" was in charge.

"The committee," Stanton replied.

Colby said he would comply "to the extent we can and still protect the (CIA's) security."