

# Stennis Seeks to Cut CIA Domestic Role

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By Judy Nicol  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Sen. John C. Stennis, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said yesterday that he hopes to hold hearings aimed at further restricting the Central Intelligence Agency's involvement in domestic affairs.

"The main thing is to limit (CIA) operations, domestic operations," said Stennis on *Face the Nation*, a CBS interview program.

"I totally disapprove" of domestic political intelligence operations by the CIA, said the Mississippi Democrat who is chairman of the Central Intelligence Subcommittee of his Armed Services Committee.

He said he was told in June, 1972, by Richard M. Helms, then CIA director, that the CIA had no involvement in the Watergate burglary. He said Helms, now ambassador to Iran, "came to my office a very few days thereafter and assured me they did not have anything to do with planning or anything in connection with

that break-in" (of the Democratic National Committee offices in the Watergate office building.)

Helms could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Helms' successor, William E. Colby, has acknowledged that the CIA had erred in preparing a psychiatric profile of Pentagon Papers defendant Daniel Ellsberg and in providing cameras, tape recorders and "safe house" facilities to White House aides E. Howard Hunt Jr. and G. Gordon Liddy. Liddy and Hunt were later convicted in the Watergate break-in.

The CIA's charter, the 1947 National Security Act, says "the agency shall have no police, subpoena, law-enforcement powers or internal security functions" in the United States.

But the 1947 statute contains a loophole which has served as a charter for special foreign and domestic operations. It says that the agency shall "perform such other functions and duties related to intelligence affecting the national security as the National Security Council may from time to time direct."

Stennis said yesterday he wanted his committee to "review the whole law, see whether the soft places are." He did not mention any particular section of the charter that he wished to tighten.

Stennis, speaking of the Watergate scandals that unfolded as he was convalescing from gunshot wounds received in a January robbery, said, "As an American citizen I'm ashamed of it."

The senator said that he had attended a recent hearing at the U.S. Court of Appeals on President Nixon's refusal to turn over tapes of conversations relating to the Watergate matter.

If the Supreme Court rules that Mr. Nixon should turn over the Watergate tapes and the President refuses, Stennis said, "I think it would be the most grave situation that's arisen maybe in a hundred years."

In an ABC broadcast yesterday, Sen. Howard Hughes (D-Iowa) said that the American people "should not be afraid of the impeachment process."