

Nedzi Is Said to Have Kept House in Dark on C.I.A.

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WASHINGTON, June 4—Representative Lucien N. Nedzi, chief of the House of Representatives' investigation of the Central Intelligence Agency, learned about C.I.A. involvement in assassination plans and domestic law violations more than a year ago and did not call for a Congressional investigation, authority sources reported today.

Although he was told in secret C.I.A. briefing about serious violations of United States law, Mr. Nedzi did not inform the general membership of the House or call for an investigation, these sources said.

Several members of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, the investigating panel that Mr. Nedzi heads, said this pre-knowledge might impair his ability to conduct a thorough and objective investigation of the C.I.A.

The question of his impartiality might result in a call for his replacement by the House Democratic leadership, one member said.

Mr. Nedzi received the briefings as the chairman of the Special Subcommittee on Intelligence of the House Armed Services Committee, which has oversight responsibility for C.I.A.

In February of this year, he was appointed to head the investigation of whether the C.I.A. and other intelligence agencies had violated the law. The inquiry was authorized by the House after press reports and charges elsewhere had raised

questions about the legality of activities of the intelligence agencies.

Mr. Nedzi did not inform other members of the investigative committee that he had secret briefings on illegal activities at the time of his appointment or since several committee members said.

Comment Declined

Reached by telephone in his Capitol Hill office, the Michigan Democrat said, "At this point it just doesn't serve any useful purpose for me to comment. I'm not going to confirm or deny what specific briefings I've had." However, Mr. Nedzi went on to note that he had had briefings on matters from the C.I.A. that was "history and it didn't prompt me to call for an investigation."

"I think all the things we learned of were long past history," he said, "and we received assurances [from the C.I.A.] that these things no longer took place."

He said the oversight committee had an "awful lot of things to do" and that he felt it was more important to try to amend the National Security Act to prevent the matters happening in the future than to begin an investigation of C.I.A. wrongdoing.

"I think it would be unfair to say we just ignored these things. We were in the process of amending the National Security Act," he said.

Two other members of the permanent oversight committee said they could not remember being told about either assassinations or C.I.A. violations



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 Lucien N. Nedzi

of laws against surveillance in the United States.

Representative F. Edward Hébert, Democrat of Louisiana, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, who appointed Mr. Nedzi to the oversight job, said he had never been told about assassination plots or specific violations of law on surveillance.

Representative Bob Wilson of California, ranking Republican on the oversight committee, said neither Mr. Nedzi nor anyone else ever told him about domestic violations of the law or assassination plots.

Mr. Wilson said that once during a hearing he had put the question of whether there

had been illegal surveillance in this country to William E. Colby, Director of Central Intelligence, and was told no. "Of course, that hasn't turned out to be true." Mr. Wilson said

Representative James V. Stanton, Democrat of Ohio, a member of the investigation committee, said, "Any member who knows of illegal acts committed by the C.I.A. and who has oversight responsibilities involving C.I.A. and who fails to try to correct them by informing the members of the House of Representatives would appear to have impaired his ability to conduct an impartial investigation."

Representative Michael J. Harrington, Democrat of Massachusetts, a consistent critic of Mr. Nedzi's chairmanship, said that if Mr. Nedzi had a complete knowledge of violations and had not told the other members of the investigating committee, it was "a deliberate effort to mislead us."

Further Action Planned

He said he had opposed Mr. Nedzi's chairmanship when he was appointed and planned to bring the matter of the secret briefings up at the Democratic caucus.

He said he foresaw that the action could result in a request to the Democratic leadership that it appoint a new chairman.

Representative Ronald V. Dellums, Democrat of California, said that if Mr. Nedzi had had such briefings his present investigatory role would "put him in the position of attacking himself or letting the issues slide by." He said that he felt

Violations

this might have impaired Mr. Nedzi's ability to conduct a thorough investigation.

In January, Mr. Colby appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee to testify about allegations of C.I.A. domestic surveillance violations. He said in 1973 the then director of the C.I.A., James R. Schlesinger, now Secretary of Defense, had put out a call to employees to report any incidents of wrongdoing or possible law violations.

At the same time the agency made a general "review of all activities of the agency which might be considered questionable under the terms of its charter," Mr. Colby said.

The one internal report on incidents reported by employees has come to be known as the "Schlesinger report," and it was combined with C.I.A.'s general review as part of what was used to brief President Ford on the C.I.A. in Vail, Colo. in January.

Colby Testimony

During his testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Mr. Colby said:

"The activities I have described to you in this statement relate to The New York Times allegations and were among those, as I have said that were reported to the director by our officials and employees in 1973 in response to his notice to all employees asking them to report any and all activities that they or others might deem questionable."

Mr. Colby alluded to an article in The Times last Dec. 22 that reported that Government sources had said the C.I.A. conducted illegal domestic surveillance activities.

"These [activities] were reported to the chairmen of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees—the Congressional bodies responsible for oversight of C.I.A.—in May, 1973," he testified. "These briefings were accompanied by my assurances that the agency's activities would be conducted strictly within its proper charter, and specific instructions were issued within the agency along these lines."

According to responsible intelligence sources, the agency also reviewed its role in plans to assassinate foreign leaders during this same period, and a "general" outline of these activities was given to Mr. Nedzi.

When press reports on domestic intelligence activities and alleged assassination plans were published in December, 1974, and early this year, the result was three major investigations of the C.I.A.

President Ford appointed a special commission under Vice President Rockefeller to investigate them. It will report to the President this Friday.

The Senate also created a special committee to investigate the intelligence agencies, but none of its members was a member of the permanent oversight committee.

The House followed suit. But, unlike the two other investigations, the House inquiry has lagged seriously. It took the House committee from February to May to choose a staff director.