

Intelligence Estimates Probe Set

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The House intelligence committee voted yesterday to subpoena U.S. intelligence estimates of Soviet military strength to determine whether the figures have been distorted within the Ford administration.

The committee approved the subpoena 7 to 2 after staff director A. Searle Field said House investigators are trying to find out if the numbers have been doctored in any way in the course of top-level in-fighting over a new strategic arms limitation agreement with the Soviet Union.

"We have substantial information that would indicate that there may be an attempt to distort the figures either by those who are in favor of detente and seeing a second SALT provision or by those who oppose that," Field said.

Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger's dismissal Sunday by President Ford is said to have been triggered in part by Schlesinger's opposition to concessions to Moscow in the SALT negotiations being conducted by Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger.

The subpoena, directed to National Security Council staff director Brent Scowcroft, calls for all reports to the NSC from various U.S. intelligence agencies concerning adherence to the 1972 strategic arms limitation treaty and a follow-up

agreement reached in Vladivostok in 1974.

"We are asking for American estimates of Soviet strength and deployment and also for the figures we were giving to the SALT negotiators for our own strength and deployment," Field said.

Central Intelligence Agency Director William E. Colby, who was also fired by President Ford Sunday and then asked to stay on until a successor could be confirmed, appeared before the committee yesterday afternoon to testify about CIA penetration of the news media and the assignment of CIA employees to other government agencies.

He said the CIA does not employ "any staff members" with general circulation American publications or broadcasting organizations, but still does pay "freelancers or stringers abroad" who occasionally write for U.S. publications.

"Even with those journalists that we do deal with—and it is a very small number," Colby said, "we do not attempt to influence what they put into their journals. We do not tell them what to write or what stories to cover."

Colby offered to give the committee the number of journalists on the CIA payroll in closed session. Before the committee moved behind closed doors, however, the CIA director acknowledged that the agency has from time

to time planted stories in the foreign press. He also indicated that the CIA still makes secret payments to foreign-based staff members of some specialized American publications.

Under questioning by Rep. Robert McClory (R-Ill.), Colby said that a former high-ranking CIA official assigned to the National Security Council staff in the Johnson administration clearly went too far and engaged in campaign activities on LBJ's behalf.

According to an official rundown of his activity, the official, Chester L. Cooper, who had been an assistant deputy CIA director for intelligence, not only "apparently participated" in the drafting of LBJ campaign speeches, but also took part in the preparation of a 1964 "fact book" issued by the Democratic National Committee on national security and foreign policy.

Meantime, the Senate intelligence committee released details of how government intelligence agencies secretly intercepted "copies of most international telegrams" from the United States starting in 1947 and in recent years planted up about 150,000 a month for intensive scrutiny.

Chairman Frank Church (D-Idaho) said the National Security Agency's long-term Project Shamrock seemed to him a clear violation of the

Fourth Amendment's ban against unreasonable searches and seizures as well as the Federal Communications Act.

Although the broad outlines of Project Shamrock had leaked out last month as a result of a parallel House investigation, the Senate committee hesitated for weeks to make its findings public in light of continued protests from NSA and the Ford administration.

The secret peacetime intercepts began under President Truman as a carryover from World War II. Last May 15 they were cancelled by Defense Department Directive.

Former NSA deputy director Louis Tordella subsequently testified in closed session that to the best of his knowledge no President since Truman had been informed of it, Church said.