

Helms Criticized in Senate For Anti-Fulbright Letter

C.I.A. Chief Apologizes for Praising Editorial Attacking Arkansan

By E. W. KENWORTHY
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WASHINGTON, July 28 —

Richard Helms, the new director of the Central Intelligence Agency, was sharply criticized in the Senate today because of a letter he wrote praising an editorial denouncing Senator J. W. Fulbright, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee.

Late this afternoon, Mr. Helms called Mr. Fulbright and told him the letter was a mistake and apologized for seeming to endorse the editorial's views.

The editorial, entitled "Brickbats for Fulbright," appeared in The St. Louis Globe-Democrat on July 18, four days after the Senate had sidetracked by a vote of 61-to-28 a proposal to add three members of the Foreign Relations Committee to the unofficial subcommittee charged with supervising the intelligence agency.

That subcommittee is made up of seven ranking members of the Armed Services and Appropriations committees under the chairmanship of Richard B. Russell, Democrat of Georgia, who is also chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

The proposal to expand the watchdog group was sponsored by Senator Eugene J. McCarthy, Democrat of Minnesota, but it

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had the full support of Mr. Fulbright and had been sent to the floor by a vote of 14-to-5 in the Foreign Relations Committee.

The Globe-Democrat editorial said the Senate had given "the crafty Arkansan," Mr. Fulbright, "his come-uppance." It continued:

"Fulbright's proposal should have been doomed from the start. It could mean the end of the C.I.A. if the agency were subjected to slaws [claws] of the militant doves on Fulbright's committee."

On July 27, The Globe-Democrat printed the following letter:

"To the Editor:

"I want to let you know of my pleasure in reading the editorial 'Brickbats for Fulbright' in The Globe-Democrat of July 18.

"It reflects so well your paper's policy of 'printing the news impartially, supporting what it



The New York Times (by George Tames)
Richard Helms

believes to be right and opposing what it believes to be wrong without regard to party politics."

RICHARD HELMS

Director, Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C.

Criticism Is Voiced

When Senator McCarthy, in midafternoon, read the editorial and letter, criticism came hurtling from both sides of the aisle at Mr. Helms, who had been unanimously confirmed a month ago today after a round of prolonged praise for abilities and judgment displayed in nearly 20 years of service with the agency.

Mr. McCarthy said it was "entirely out of place" for Mr. Helms to have "endorsed an editorial of this kind." If he had in fact written the letter and if it had not been written for him by a subordinate, Mr. McCarthy said, then this "involvement in domestic politics" marks a "new departure," which might lead to letters publicly criticizing the agency's opponents.

Mike Mansfield of Montana, the Democratic leader, asked Mr. McCarthy to yield and said:

"I am more than a little surprised that the silent service has seen fit to write to a paper expressing critical opinions about the Senate."

Mr. Mansfield suggested that the Senate's displeasure should be brought to Mr. Helms' attention "so that it will not become a habit with him."

Mr. Mansfield said he had been under the impression that Mr. Helms "could well be the best administrator the C.I.A. ever had."

Coming to the defense of Mr. Fulbright, Senator Mansfield said that the point made by Mr. Fulbright in arguing for inclusion of members of his committee in the watchdog committee—namely that the intelligence agency was involved in foreign policy—was a pertinent one.

No one, Mr. Mansfield said, had ever accused Mr. Fulbright of being "crafty."

Mr. McCarthy said that Mr. Helms owed an apology not only to the Senators who had supported his resolution but also to every member of the Senate.

Senator Frank E. Moss, Democrat of Utah, said the agency was supposed to work "clandestinely," but now was found writing a letter praising "an offensive editorial."

Two members of the watchdog committee then joined in the criticism of Mr. Helms. Milton R. Young, Republican of North Dakota, said he was "disappointed and shocked," and John Stennis, Democrat of Mississippi, called the letter "very unfortunate."

Mr. Fulbright said he was not offended by the editorial, but he was surprised that Mr. Helms, a career man, would have so little discretion, and he wondered whether Mr. Helms had misconstrued the Senate's vote of confirmation.

One reason he wanted representation for his committee, Mr. Fulbright said, was to have the opportunity to ask Mr. Helms whether the agency "takes part in domestic affairs." He had heard reports, he said, that "this agency takes part in the elections of unions."

During these exchanges, another member of the watchdog group, Leverett Saltonstall, Republican of Massachusetts, went into the cloakroom to telephone Mr. Helms.

On returning, Mr. Saltonstall said Mr. Helms had told him he had written the letter; that it was a mistake; that he was sorry, and that there were no other such letters.

Later, the Foreign Relations Committee announced Mr. Helms will meet with it in closed session at 10:30 A.M. tomorrow. The meeting was arranged during a conversation between Mr. Fulbright and Mr. Helms after the debate.