

NYT

NO. 2 C.I.A. POST REMAINS VACANT

Stennis Reported to Oppose Military Man for Job

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 27—The White House has delayed filling the No. 2 position at the Central Intelligence Agency for more than two months out of deference to Senator John C. Stennis, Government sources say.

Late in December, they say, President Nixon chose Maj. Gen. Vernon A. Walters, a veteran Army intelligence officer, to succeed Lieut. Gen. Robert E. Cushman of the Marines as Deputy Director of Central Intelligence.

General Walters, who speaks seven languages, accompanied the President to the Azores last fall and served as his personal interpreter in the meeting there with President Pompidou of France.

However, informants say Senator Stennis, who is Chairman of the Armed Services Committee and virtually a one-



Gen. Vernon A. Walters

man watchdog committee on C.I.A. activities, has privately indicated that he would prefer a civilian.

Under the National Security Act of 1947, which created the agency, the director, who is paid \$42,500 yearly, and the deputy director, who receives \$40,000, may not both be military men.

Both may be civilians, however. In recent years the tradition has been to have a civilian director and military deputy or vice versa.

Senator Stennis, Democrat of Mississippi, is an influential supporter of the agency and is said by his associates to hold Richard M. Helms, its director, a civilian, in high esteem. Mr. Helms is said to reciprocate fully.

The mutual regard has aroused in other influential Senators the belief that Mr. Helms runs the agency's global activities with virtually no meaningful supervision by Congress other than that of Senator Stennis.

Last year, for example, Senator Stennis held no meetings of the subcommittee on C.I.A. activities, which he heads.

Senator Stennis was traveling today and unavailable for comment. Mr. Helms, too, was unavailable.

Sources close to the intelligence community, however, expressed surprise that Senator Stennis was insisting on a civilian deputy. They pointed out that Mr. Helms and his senior aides traditionally prefer a military deputy to obtain quick, close cooperation with the Defense Department around the world.

Reorganization a Factor

An aide to Senator Stennis, reached by telephone in Mississippi, said that the Senator had no personal objection to the appointment of General Walters. If President Nixon formally sent the nomination to the Armed Services Committee for confirmation, the aide said, Senator Stennis would vote to approve it.

However, he and certain other influential Senators are said to have resented the way that President Nixon and Henry A. Kissinger, his national security assistant, disclosed on Nov. 5 a major reorganization of national intelligence. There was virtually no consultation with Congress.

The announcement came late on a Friday afternoon after the President, his staff and the White House reporters had left for Key Biscayne, Fla. There was no warning to the press and no substantive briefing. Many suspected the announcement was timed to appear in Saturday newspapers, lightly read in most of the country.