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Report on Peace Move Called 'Libel'

Washington

A Democrat on the House Internal Security Committee accused the group yesterday of libeling the peace movement.

Republican members defended the Democratic chairman for his report on anti-war demonstrations.

Chairman Richard H. Ichord (Dem-Mo.) in a 55,000-word committee report to the House, said his panel's hearings into organizational operations for last year's massive demonstrations here have alerted Americans to "the degree of Communist direction of the anti-war movement."

"Perhaps 95 per cent of those who participated in the mass anti-war demonstrations were loyal Americans, honestly opposed to the awful conflict in Southeast Asia. But it was also important — and these hearings provided concrete proof — to learn that much of the planning, propaganda and direction for these demonstrations came from Communists seeking an American defeat in South Vietnam," Ichord added.

In a six-page dissent and general attack on the committee's activities, Representative Robert F. Drinan (Dem.-Mass.) said the report contains "thousands of totally unsubstantiated libels."

Drinan said it sets forth "grossly irresponsible libels upon the groups which led last May's Washington peace demonstrations, the National Peace Action Coalition and the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice, and upon the peace movement in general."

Lowest in seniority among the committee's five Democrats, Drinan said the peace group hearings and this report "make a mockery of the First, Fourth and Ninth Amendments to the Constitution."

All four Republicans on the committee — Representatives John M. Ashbrook of Ohio, Roger H. Zion of Indiana, Fletcher Thompson of Georgia and John G. Schmitz of California — signed a five-page statement supporting Ichord.