

Hurdles Seen for New Panel on CIA

By Walter Pincus

Washington Post Staff Writer

It could take a year or longer and unprecedented security arrangements for members of Congress and their staffs before a new House committee on intelligence is established, according to key members.

The early establishment of a new committee is blocked by:

White House opposition, a jurisdictional fight among existing committees, the backlash from the leaks of the report prepared by the ad hoc intelligence committee headed by Rep. Otis Pike (D-N.Y.), the complexities of overseeing intelligence and the fact that only a handful of legislators is willing to take the lead in the reform process.

"The air has gone out of the balloon," said Rep. John Anderson (R-Ill.), chairman of the Republican Policy Committee. "There was too much blabbering from the Pike committee and the House is now willing to relax and go back to its old ways."

Chairman Melvin Price (D-Ill.) of the House Armed Services Committee said:

"We don't think there has to be a new committee . . . Under the rules this committee has jurisdiction. We've had it for many years."

Price added that his Subcommittee on Intelligence had continued meeting during the year that the Pike committee functioned. Its last meeting was Friday when new CIA Director George Bush came in for the first time.

For Price, the need now "is to tighten up control that we have. We think it is a mistake to scatter (CIA information) over a number of committees." Under present law, CIA must report to three House committees when the

President approves a new, significant covert operation.

Armed Services Committee member Samuel Stratton (D-N.Y.) said criticism of the old armed services CIA oversight was not "justified" and that the "previous committee worked as far as secrets were concerned."

For Stratton and others, "how to get a committee that won't leak" is the biggest problem.

Rep. Richard Bolling (D-Mo.), who as a ranking member of the Rules Committee expects to take the lead in seeking the new intelligence committee, said it is "absolutely essential" to develop a new security system for any oversight committee.

Bolling suggested limiting the number of House members who have access to sensitive intelligence material as part of any new committee. Under present rules, any House member can see the secret transcripts of any committee.

"It's unpopular," Bolling said, "but the idea that the election process automatically gives a person the right to see secret information is a joke. Some should not have access since they just would not understand the importance of what they learn."

Bolling said, however, that effective oversight of foreign intelligence is one of the most

important issues before Congress.

The task, he said, "is to figure how to pull the new committee together." The Rules Committee, which will handle any proposal for a new committee, has already shown a division on the issue.

Rules member Rep. John

Young (D-Tex.) led the successful fight to have the Pike committee report kept secret.

"Some on the (Rules) Committee want to stay here we are," Bolling said, "and therefore you may be talking about years" before any new intelligence oversight committee is formed.