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Senate Chiefs Back Single Panel To Watch C.I.A. and Its Budget

NYTimes By DAVID E. ROSENBAUM MAY 12 1976
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WASHINGTON, May 11 — Senate leaders reached a compromise agreement today on a plan to create a permanent new committee with exclusive authority to monitor the Central Intelligence Agency and authorize funds for the agency's operations.

Despite the continued opposition of some conservative senators of both parties, the plan is expected to be approved this week by a large margin in the full Senate.

The adoption of the compromise by four key Senators apparently averted a full scale floor fight between members of the Senate's old guard and

younger, more reform-minded senators.

Such a fight might have had major implications for the contest for the Senate majority leadership next year.

The compromise was devised by Mike Mansfield of Montana, the majority leader; Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia, the majority whip; Abraham A. Ribicoff of Connecticut, chairman of the Government Operations Committee, and Howard W. Cannon of Nevada, chairman of the Committee on Rules and Administration. All are Democrats.

Senator Hugh Scott of Penn-

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CHIEFS IN SENATE BACK C.I.A. CURBS

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sylvania, the Republican leader, was consulted and agreed to accept the plan.

The critical element of the agreement was the concession by Mr. Byrd and Mr. Cannon that the new committee could have the power to limit the Central Intelligence Agency's budget and restrict its operations.

For his part, Senator Ribicoff agreed that the new committee would have to share jurisdiction over other intelligence agencies with existing committees. Au-

thority over the budget for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, for instance, would be shared with the Judiciary Committee, and authority over the Defense Intelligence Agency would be shared with the Armed Services Committee.

Lack of Control Noted

The central finding of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities in its report last month was that Congress had exercised far too little control over the intelligence agencies.

The committee recommended the creation of a new Senate committee with broad power to regulate the work and expenditures of all intelligence agencies.

Senator Ribicoff's Govern-

ment Operations Committee voted to create such a committee. But its work was overturned two weeks ago by Senator Cannon's Rules Committee, which voted to give the new committee no law-making or budgetary authority. Senator Byrd led the effort in the Rules Committee to strip the new committee of real power.

Sources privy to the negotiations that led to the compromise said that Senator Byrd had become convinced that his advocacy of a weak intelligence oversight committee would damage his prospects of becoming majority leader next year upon Senator Mansfield's retirement.

His candidacy is supported by older, conservative Democrats such as John C. Stennis of Mississippi and John L. McClellan of Arkansas, who would

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have to give up to the new committee some of their long-held jurisdiction over intelligence matters.

However, the sources said, Mr. Byrd feared that by appearing to carry the spear for the old Guard Senators he would lose considerable support among younger senators, who want to keep tighter Congressional reins on the intelligence agencies.

Muskie Also in Race

Senator Byrd was a home in West Virginia today. He is a favorite son candidate for President in today's Democratic presidential primary there.

For a time, since Senator Mansfield announced he would retire, the race to become majority leader appeared to be be-

tween Mr. Byrd and Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine with Mr. Byrd the odds on favorite.

However the picture has become complicated by the decision of Senator Hubert H. Humphrey not to seek the Presidency and to run for re-election to the Senate from Minnesota.

Senator Humphrey is possibly the most popular Democrat in the Senate. Many Senate Democrats are now predicting that Mr. Humphrey will run for majority leader, that Mr. Muskie will drop out of the race and that Mr. Humphrey will have an excellent chance to defeat Mr. Byrd.

The gossip around the Senate last week was that, if Mr. Byrd pressed his effort to strip the

new intelligence committee of law-making and budgetary power, Senator Humphrey would take an active role on the other side in the expected floor fight.

If the compromise is accepted by the full Senate, as expected, it will mean that Congress will vote each year on the money to run intelligence agencies, something it has not done before.

Persons experienced in drafting legislation said that they could not comprehend how Congress could enact such an authorization bill without making public the amount of funds authorized.

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