

Controlling the C.I.A.

Senator Cooper's proposal that the Central Intelligence Agency share with Congress its intelligence estimates is a logical corollary to the reassertion of Congressional responsibility in the making of foreign policy. The lawmakers obviously cannot fulfill their constitutional function in this vital area with maximum wisdom and effectiveness unless they have access to the best available information.

As matters now stand, the Executive enjoys almost exclusive access to information compiled by the intelligence community. Congress is thus at a serious disadvantage in attempting to weigh important policy decisions, especially when an Administration makes public only selective intelligence data designed to support its policies.

Senator Cooper has emphasized that his proposal is not aimed at C.I.A. operations, sources or methods, but is "concerned only with the end result—the facts and analyses of facts." It would not compromise and it does not seek to control intelligence operations. Indeed, Senate approval of the Cooper bill would represent in a sense a vote of confidence in the intelligence community—at least in its information-gathering function.

The question of control over the vast intelligence network, and especially of the C.I.A.'s clandestine action operations, is raised in other proposals. These include three bills prepared by Senator Case designed to increase Congressional control over C.I.A. participation in foreign wars and quasi-military operations; a bill introduced by Senator McGovern requiring C.I.A. funds to appear as a single line item in the budget; and long-standing efforts to strengthen over-all Congressional oversight of the intelligence agency. The principle of such proposals merits support of a Congress that too long has neglected its essential role in the formulation of United States foreign policy.