

Marshall's Doubts About the CIA

Washington

General of the Army George C. Marshall, while Secretary of State, told President Truman in 1947 that he had severe doubts about plans to create the Central Intelligence Agency because "the powers of the proposed agency seem almost unlimited and need clarification."

Marshall's memorandum to Mr. Truman on Feb. 7, 1947, five months before the agency went into operation under the provision of the National Security Act of 1947, is included in a volume of documents made public by the State Department as part of its regular historical series on foreign relations.

The Marshall document seems to have contemporary relevance because of the announcement last week by Senator John C. Stennis, chairman of the Armed Services Committee, that he had ordered a full review of the CIA's charter to prevent the agency's involvement in

Laotian-style secret wars, or in activity like Watergate.

Senate critics of the CIA have attacked the language of the original National Security Act as too vague and ambiguous.

They have specifically cited the agency's authorization "to perform for the benefit of existing intelligence agencies such additional services of common concern as the National Security Council determines can be more effectively accomplished centrally" and another provision calling on the agency "to perform such other functions and duties related to intelligence affecting the national security as the National Security Council may from time to time direct."

Marshall, in his memorandum, did not specify what language he was wary of approving. Rather, he seemed concerned about setting up a peacetime intelligence agency with wide-ranging responsibilities that might diminish the influence of the

State Department.

During World War II Marshall was the top American military leader. He headed a special mission to China in 1946 to seek a negotiated end to the war between the Nationalists and Communists. He was recalled to Washington in early 1947 to become Secretary of State.

He said in the memo:

"The Foreign Service of

the Department of State is the only collection agency of the government which covers the whole world, and we should be very slow to subject the collection and evaluation of this foreign intelligence to other establishments, especially during times of peace. The powers of the proposed agency seem almost unlimited and need clarification."

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