

Hill Seeks Firmer Rein

By William Greider
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The Senate Government Operations subcommittee chaired by Gen. Edmund S. Muskie began pulling together ideas yes-

terday for congressional harnessing of a \$6 billion government activity—secret surveillance at home and abroad.

Muskie's committee heard three senators offer competing

proposals for taking a firmer rein on the Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Pentagon and other federal agencies that do secret intelli-

on CIA, FBI

gence-gathering and investigative work.

Muskie said there is considerable disagreement over how to proceed, but a general sentiment exists for strengthening congressional oversight of those agencies.

"We have seen alarming evidence," Muskie declared, "that we have created a monster. We have the FBI spying on congressmen and on domestic political groups. We have had the CIA involved in political shenanigans spawned by the White House staff. And we have had military agents spying on civilians on behalf of an agency created by executive order."

Sen. Howard H. Baker Jr. (R-Tenn.) pushed for his own measure, co-sponsored by 33 senators, to create a joint congressional committee on "intelligence oversight" that would examine foreign and domestic spy activities.

Sen. Gaylord Nelson (D-Wis.) spoke for his more modest proposal—a joint committee aimed only at monitoring domestic surveillance activities.

Sen. Charles McC. Mathias Jr. (R-Md.) argued that, before any permanent oversight structure is created, Congress

should first commission a two-year study of the fundamentals of intelligence gathering, exploring for example whether the CIA's "convert operations" are needed or legal.

Another witness, former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, offered his own 10-point plan for controlling the spy activity. Among other things, Clark wants Congress to make it a crime for military intelligence officers to spy on non-military civilians. He also proposed a Federal Investigative and Enforcement Review Board, composed of private citizens, to look into complaints about federal surveillance.

Muskie, who hasn't yet chosen among the competing approaches, said he hopes the next Congress will produce a consensus, but he conceded that the principal obstacle is the jurisdictional prerogatives of existing congressional committees. Any new committee to oversee intelligence gathering would necessarily cut into the authority of the Judiciary and Armed Services committees, which now have oversight responsibility for the CIA, the FBI and the Pentagon.

"We're approaching it very gingerly," Muskie said.