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Squabble on Making CIA Budget Public

Washington

Representative Rovert Giaimo (Dem-Conn.) said yesterday that the top secret budget for the Central Intelligence Agency — traditionally hidden in allotted outlays for other agencies — is concealed in a \$2 billion appropriation for the Air Force.

Congressmen who oppose disclosure, including House Appropriations Committee Chairman George Mahon (Dem-Tex.), say the figure will help America's enemies and — a point that Giaimo accepts — disclosure of the total may lead to more specific revelations about America's spy activities.

Giaimo is leading an attempt to make public the total spent for the CIA's spying activities as part of the House debate on the \$112 billion bill to give the Pentagon money for its needs between July 1 and Sept. 30, 1976.

The House did not decide the issue yesterday and a vote is expected today.

"I'm telling you today that the funds for the Central Intelligence Agency are concealed in the line that says, 'for other procurement Air Force, \$2,010,400,000,'" said Giaimo, waving a copy of the bill.

"This amendment will not cut any funds . . . We retain in this bill the exact funds the committee voted for the CIA."

Heretofore, there has been no indication of how much the CIA spends.

And Giaimo's figure does not include money for the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency or the military intelligence units. They, Giaimo said, are concealed elsewhere in the bill.

In the past, knowledge of U.S. intelligence spending has been known to a small, select group of senators and representatives.

In its report, the Appropriations Committee said that \$344.2 million has already been cut from various intelligence-gathering requests, and that it has sent the CIA and other agencies a secret letter with guidance on how to spend the money.

The total figure is available to all members on a secret basis, but Giaimo kept pushing to make it public. "All of us have responsibilities in this Congress," he said.

"The House of Representatives can't exercise its oversight (supervision) if you gentlemen don't even know the figure they spend in a year."

"Where do we go from here?" asked Representative Frank E. Evans (Dem-Colo.). "It may lead us down the road to further disclosures."

"I'm not sure how far I or anyone else wants to go in this area," Giaimo replied.

"We understand the reasons for secrecy, for covert actions, but we are sure the present system does not work. The pendulum has swung too far toward national security and away from personal safety."

The amount, said Representative Jack Kemp (Rep-N.Y.), "should be classified. The information should not be made public."

"No country in the world reveals this information to the public. It provides our enemies information about the size and trends of our intelligence spending . . . and it starts an inexorable process toward revealing even more information."

Associated Press