

Senate Unit Backs Knoche Nomination To No. 2 C.I.A. Job

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WASHINGTON, June 23 (AP) —The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities approved today the nomination of E. Henry Knoche to be deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mr. Knoche, 51 years old, who has served for 23 years in intelligence analysis at the agency, received 12 affirmative votes for confirmation after testifying at the first open hearing of the new committee. The committee was formed May 19 to oversee intelligence agencies. The three other members of the panel were to be polled later.

Mr. Knoche, who will head day-to-day operations of the C.I.A. as first assistant to its director, George Bush, said that he could conceive of no circumstances in which he could recommend that an agency of the United States engage in a political assassination in peacetime.

He said that he believed strongly that the Government needed the capability of carrying out covert activities "to lessen the prospects of hostilities or other problems abroad."

But he said that covert activity comprised only 2 percent of the C.I.A. budget for the fiscal year 1977. The figure was more than 50 percent in cold war period after World War II, he added.

Mr. Knoche told the committee that he believed guidelines could be worked out for informing its members on covert activity. However, he said, the committee "is going to have to get some understanding with the White House" as to when disclosure should be made of covert actions under consideration.

The agency, he said, is basically "an instrument of foreign policy" and acts on decisions made by "higher authority."