

Carter Restates Faith in Sorensen

Plains

Despite mounting opposition in Washington, President-elect Jimmy Carter stood firm here yesterday on his choice of Theodore C. Sorensen to become director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

In a terse statement released by his local office, Carter reaffirmed his nomination of the former confidant of President Kennedy, who has come under fire in the last few days for his personal use of classified materials taken from White House files.

In Washington meanwhile, many of the senators who will vote on Sorensen's nomination voiced varying degrees of opposition to his confirmation. The senators, interviewed by telephone, are members

of the Select Committee on Intelligence, which opens public hearings today on the Sorensen nomination.

Some members have expressed their opposition based on Sorensen's own affidavit, given for the trial of Daniel Ellsberg, who was involved in the unauthorized release of the Pentagon Papers, in which Sorensen said he had used classified White House material in writing his book about the Kennedy administration and then enjoyed a tax deduction based on his donation of the documents to the National Archives.

Committee sources, however, said opposition also stemmed from his inexperience in foreign intelligence; his role in helping Senator Edward M. Kennedy (Dem-Mass.)

explain the Chappaquiddick incident; his status of conscientious objector in avoiding military service; and the role of his law firm, which represents several multinational corporations and such foreign governments as Zaire, Sierra Leone and Iran, where the CIA has influence.

The President-elect described such criticism yesterday as "groundless and unfair" and said it was his understanding that Sorensen's treatment of the classified material was "common practice" in administrations of both parties.

Carter said that "it would be most unfortunate" if Sorensen were to be denied confirmation.

The New York Times reached
Back Page Col. 4

From Page 1

10 of the 15 Intelligence Committee members and found seven opposed to the nomination. Two others were quoted by others to be in opposition. One senator was undecided and two favored the appointment.

Opposition on the select committee was voiced by Republicans Barry Goldwater, E. J. Garn, Strom Thurmond and Howard H. Baker Jr. Senator Robert T. Stafford said he was unsure how he would vote because of "questions raised."

Democratic members of the committee who indicated their opposition to Sorensen included Joseph R. Biden Jr., Robert B. Morgan and Walter Huddleston. Adlai Stevenson III and Daniel K. Inouye, the committee chairman, were reported by other senators to be opposed also.

"I've made a head count, and at this moment I think the odds are against the nomination being reported out of committee," said Baker (Rep-Tenn.).

The differences between the senators and Carter reflect the first substantive clash between him and Congress, a confrontation Carter has tried to avoid with a sustained courtship of the legislators both in person and over the telephone.

Carter, apparently anticipating that reporters waiting for him outside the Plains Baptist Church yesterday would ask him about Sorensen, carefully avoided them when he emerged from the services. In so doing, he also eschewed his traditional handshaking session with a crowd of waiting tourists.

Some of the reporters seemed upset, but he ignored their calls and, after a few waves and smiles in their direction, he ducked into a waiting car and was driven quickly with his wife, Rosalynn, and daughter, Amy, back to their home a few blocks away where aides said he would spend the afternoon working on his inaugural address.

Nevertheless, in the late afternoon, his mimeographed statement of support for Sorensen was released, with the notation that further questions could be directed to Jody Powell, his press secretary. Powell, however, was unavailable.

"The way things are shaping up now, it's going to be bloody," said a Senate staff member who has been observing the evolutions of the showdown between the president-elect and the intelligence committee.

Sorensen's spokesman, Richard M. Neustadt, said testimony in the confirmation hearings would reflect the nominee's view that, "charges have been made that don't correspond with the facts."

"When the senators have all the facts they will know that there were no improper actions at all," during Sorensen's White House period, Neustadt asserted.

He remarked, concerning charges of Kennedy administration leaks of classified information in briefings to newsmen by Sorensen,

that they had been "conducted at the direction of the president," who presumably had the power to "declassify" secrets at will.

Neustadt said Carter had telephoned Sorensen yesterday morning to reiterate his support for him

and to discuss the problems that had arisen on the nomination.

Sorensen is expected to convey his financial statement and records to the committee this morning, he said.

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