

July 1958

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EXCERPT

OCA # 73-297

box 2

Ellender folder

Capital Assignment at 7:35 p.m. over GMS (Washington) and the MBS Network:

ANNOUNCER: "CIA fails dismally to provide facts, says Senator Ellender... Tonight Senator Allen Ellender, Democrat from Louisiana, member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and majority member of the special committee on Reduction of Non-Essential Federal Expenditures, and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, Bernard Brenner, veteran capital correspondent for United Press International, quizzes Senator Ellender...

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ANNOUNCER: "Is the super-secret CIA providing Congress with facts? Does Congress know how the CIA operates? One member of the Senate voiced dissatisfaction with many of the practices used by Central Intelligence. Senator Allen Ellender, Louisiana Democrat, member of the Joint Committee on Federal Expenditures, was quizzed by Bernard Brenner of United Press International, his Capital Assignment."

BRENNER: "Senator Ellender, did the Central Intelligence Agency and its director, Allen Dulles, fall down on us in Iraq by not giving our government proper warning of what was about to happen?"

ELLENDER: "Well, that's the impression that I have; although I've been a member of the Appropriations Committee now for ten years, I have been unable to obtain information as to how this huge agency operates. There's no doubt in my mind that it has dismally failed in the Middle East in not providing the people on the Washington level with the ... with facts which should have been available. Not only did they fall down in the Iraq mess, but also with the Suez crisis, I think last year, and they should have been able to furnish more information about the conditions in Lebanon."

BRENNER: "Senator, from your own knowledge of the Middle East -- and you've traveled there widely as a member of the Appropriations Committee -- is the Central Intelligence Agency and our other government intelligence people giving the Washington people a realistic picture of the area?"

ELLENDER: "I doubt it very seriously. The -- our people at the local level, that is, representing us in that area, don't seem to grasp the situation as it really is. As an instance, the main trouble there is between the Israelis and the Arabs. That's the crux of it all, and if ways and means could be found out to give the true picture, and if they would, as a matter of fact, tell the American people what the trouble really is, which is this difficulty between the Arabs and the Israelis, our government might be prone to take a different course."

BRENNER: "Senator, how much does the Congress of the United States, especially the Senate with its responsibility for foreign policy, really know about the CIA and how it works?"

ELLENDER: "Nothing, except that we provide huge sums of money. We

have -- some of us have an idea of how it operates, but personally, in my travels abroad, I found -- I found them in every corner of every country I've ever visited. They are there in droves. They believe in quantity of workers and not quality of workers, in my judgment, and it's my further belief that they delve too much in minor details, and they try to -- to get -- they have a cogs of workers here on the Washington level that remind me of a lot of bookshaws trying to follow through with every little detail, and trying to sift out what this and that means. And the big problems seem to be overlooked."

SENATOR: "Senator, along these lines, I have heard members of Congress who also are familiar to some extent with the workings of this agency say that it's big-killing is that in reporting foreign developments, it reports possibilities and not probabilities. Do you agree?"

ELLENBERG: "I agree thoroughly. They seem to use their imagination more than actual facts. Another thing that I've found is that a lot of the men that we send abroad are inexperienced, and it strikes me that it's woefully short of men of ability. Once one gets on CIA, why, he stays there for a long time, whether he's competent or not, in my own judgment, because I would hope for the American people to know of the vast hordes of workers throughout this -- the world, that are working with CIA. I know the figures approximately, but I wouldn't -- I'm not permitted to say."

SENATOR: "Senator, one final question. Do you think it's possible and practical and desirable for the Congress to establish some closer sort of supervision of this agency?"

ELLENBERG: "Well, I think so, provided that we do not in any manner affect our security. I think that some of us ought to know how this money is being spent, how many employees are there, and be given a briefing now and then of what accomplishments they've done. And if we were taken in and taken the confidence of the CIA to that extent, I believe that it would be a salutary thing for the whole organization."

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