

Reporters Roundup
Washington, D.C.
6:30 P.M.

Moderator: Ken French,
Guest: Senator Wayne Morse, Dem., Oregon.
Panel of reporters: Jack Bell, Chief of Senate Staff
of Associated Press,
Sam Schaeffer, Chief Congressional
correspondent of Newsweek.

The following was heard, in part:

QUESTION: "Senator, in your absence you let it be known in the Senate that you would like to object to the confirmation of McCone. You were not able to return in time to participate in the debate. Would you tell us briefly why you objected to the confirmation of Mr. McCone to head the CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY?"

SENATOR MORSE: "Two reasons--first in a speech that I made before I left the Senate to go to the conference, I pointed out that I think that the extraordinary powers of CIA, where there is no Congressional check upon the CIA, where no member of Congress, for example, has access to the activities of the CIA, as different for example in our atomic energy program. Yet staff members, administrative officers of the Pentagon and the State Department, the CIA, men who have never been elected, do have access--violated what I consider to be the spirit and the intent of the check and balance system of the Constitution. And therefore, I said, anyone that is appointed to the Chairmanship of CIA, or the Directorship of the CIA, until we get some legislation passed such as the McCarthy proposal for a Congressional watch-dog over CIA ought to be beyond suspicion as to his qualifications.

"And I took note of the fact, and discussed it in my speech on the floor of the Senate, that I think there are serious questions in regard to his conflict of interests. I think there are serious questions in regard to his past performances that lead me to have doubt as to whether this extraordinary power ought to be vested in this man, until at least there was first set up a Congressional watch-dog committee. And therefore, I said in that speech the burden of proof is on the administration to satisfy beyond the question of a doubt that this man is fully qualified. And as far as I am concerned, they did not sustain that burden of proof, and I asked to be paired against the nomination."

QUESTION: "Senator, I take it you don't regard as sufficient then the investigation, or inquiry that was made into the CIA and its activities by subcommittees of the House and Senate Armed Services Committee, and as subcommittees to the appropriations committee."

MORSE: "Not when we can't ourselves see the evidence and see the record. Because after all, they can only speak for themselves as Senators, and I as a Senator have a solemn duty to keep faith with my oath, and to satisfy myself that each nominee does have the qualifications to perform the very extraordinary power in this instance that the CIA director has. And therefore they can't speak for me--I have to speak for myself, and denied the evidence myself, I couldn't vote for it."

QUESTION: "Senator, I wasn't speaking to the point of the qualifications of the man, only of whether there is any Congressional check, and these peer subcommittees evidently make a Congressional check every year, of what the CIA is doing. Now you don't regard that as sufficient. In other words, if you are not a member of one of those subcommittees you would not know intimately what they were doing anyhow."

MORSE: "But, plus this, Jack, they do not have the kind of a check I'm talking about--they do not have full access to all the files and all the activities of the CIA. And as Chairman of the subcommittee on Latin American affairs, may I say here, as I said on the floor of the Senate, I have been very much concerned in the past in regard to some of the CIA activities in Latin America. You know that I did not share the point of view that the so-called Bay of Pigs expedition was a wise expedition. And I think that if a watch-dog committee--"

QUESTION: "And this the CIA did?"

MORSE: "Of course--They were a party to it, and they recommended it, and their Director so testified after the fact before it. I'm satisfied that a Congressional watch-dog committee, having access to the activities of the CIA would have been in a position to have prevented that mistake, and I don't think that mistake would have occurred, and I want to say quite frankly, that I think our problems in Latin America would be less serious if it hadn't occurred."

QUESTION: "Such a committee would have brought pressure on the President--that's what you're saying, in effect, isn't it?"

MORSE: "Well it could result in a disclosure to the President, of the facts that they thought didn't support the actions the CIA was recommending to him. That's part of the check and balance system."