

CPYRGHT

Tut, Tut, Senators

With the problems of Vietnam warfare, escalating inflation, an airline strike, foreign aid slashes and, of course, election-year politics pressing upon members of the United States Senate, it seems they could find better use for their time than crackling out a rhubarb because CIA Director Richard Helms wrote a letter commending an editorial in The Globe-Democrat.

The editorial praised the Central Intelligence Agency for its accomplishments and noted the Senate properly rebuked Chairman Fulbright of the Foreign Relations Committee for seeking—as Senator Russell has stated—to “muscle into” supervision of CIA long maintained by a special committee of Mr. Russell’s Armed Services Committee and the Appropriations Committee.

The Senate vote, routing the Fulbright play,

was a whopping 61 to 28, which by any yardstick seems a right crushing rebuke. Why wouldn’t Mr. Helms feel buoyed up by the Senate ballot and by our editorial approving it?

We print letters from Cabinet Ministers, Senators and other high officials. Do Senators think the CIA Director should exist in a public vacuum and not enjoy any rights of the free speech they so forthrightly and fulsomely use? He was not divulging or discussing intelligence matters.

It’s been a long, hot summer on Capitol Hill. And Senators would like to get onto campaign trails. Maybe that accounts for the teapot-temperatousness over a minor incident that should not have ruffled the greatest deliberative body on earth.