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Performance Below Par, U.S. Says of Koczak

By the Associated Press

The State Department has advised a Senate subcommittee that Stephen A. Koczak, a Foreign Service officer, was retired because of his substandard performance record.

Koczak had complained that he was forced into retirement after charging a superior in Berlin with security violations and that he was denied his rights in trying to defend himself.

But the department said yesterday it is "convinced that he has received fair and just treatment." It also said a decision to retire Koczak was reached before he made his charge to the secretary of state.

The department's position is stated in a Dec. 12 letter from John M. Steeves, acting deputy undersecretary for administration, to Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr., D-N.C., chairman of the Senate Constitutional Rights subcommittee.

Serious Questions

Ervin wrote Secretary of State Dean Rusk on Nov. 17 asking a report. Ervin said if Koczak's allegations were true they raised "serious questions concerning . . . fundamental fair play in the department's dealings with its employees."

Steeves wrote that department selection boards annually review the performance record of all Foreign Service officers and in 1961 Koczak was ranked in the lowest 5 percent of his class because of substandard performance in Berlin during the period September 1960 to May 1961.

Steeves wrote that in 1962, after Koczak had been advised of the findings in an effort to assist him "in overcoming his weaknesses," he was placed in the lowest 10 percent of his class.

A decision then was made to retire him, Steeves' letter said, and Koczak was informed that his retirement would be effective on April 30, 1963.

"On April 23, 1963, Mr. Koczak addressed a letter to the secretary of state in which he made serious accusations against several of his superiors in Berlin . . ." Steeves wrote.

Koczak had complained to the Senate group, an aide reported, that while in Berlin derogatory



-AP

STEPHAN A. KOCZAK

statements about him had been placed in his efficiency report after he charged a superior with placing telephone calls to Warsaw from East Berlin to avoid possible monitoring by the CIA or State Department security officers.

Steeves said that after Koczak's April 1963 letter a special board was convened to investigate his charges and it concluded "the major charges made by Mr. Koczak had not been established."

However, he said, the board also concluded that in its opinion the record disclosed errors in administration regarding Mr. Koczak's assignment, his service in Berlin, and the handling of his efficiency report" and his retirement was concealed in December 1963.

Board Makes Evaluation

Koczak then was assigned to work in the department's historical department, Steeves said, but in 1964 another selection board placed him "in the lowest 5 percent of his class and found that he did not meet the standards required for officers of his class."

He then was advised he would be retired on June 30, 1965, but Steeves said Koczak requested and was granted postponement to Jan. 31, 1966, to enable him to complete the library science course.

Steeves said Koczak now is receiving annual retirement pay of \$6,454.