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Rostow Denies Security Clearance Refused Him

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WASHINGTON — (AP) —

Walt W. Rostow, special assistant to President Johnson, denies assertions he was three times rejected for security clearance during President Dwight D. Eisenhower's administration.

A brief filed in a Civil Service case at the State Department makes the charges. It was filed with a department hearings officer last month on behalf of Otto F. Otepka, who is fighting dismissal as the department's chief security evaluations officer.

"From 1951 onward," Rostow told a reporter when asked Friday about the brief's allegations. "I had continuous security clearances from various agencies of the federal government." Eisenhower took office in 1953.

The State Department said only: "There will be no comment from the Department of State on any matter involving the Otepka case while that case is being heard."

Although the brief has never been made public and Otepka's attorney, Roger Robb, declined to discuss it, a person who has seen it gave a reporter some details.

This informant, who would not permit use of his name, confirmed the brief makes the reported statement about Rostow and the Eisenhower administration.

The informant said, however, that he understood the rejections of Rostow for certain assignments at that time were not based on security reasons but because Rostow's particular talents did not meet the requirements.

Rostow, 51, has long had a reputation for scholarly achievement in international studies and has been a prolific writer in this field. His current White House post is that of chief adviser on international matters. He is widely

as one of the strong voices in the administration for U.S. firmness in Vietnam.

The late President John F. Kennedy brought Rostow into the government from Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he was a professor of economics.

Although Rostow said he had had security clearance since 1951, he did not say why he had been given it at that time, a year when Harry S. Truman was president.

Rostow's biographical data on Who's Who list him as a staff member in 1951 of the Center for International Studies, a private agency. Eminent scholars sometimes receive security clearance so they may make use of classified documents in their studies.

The brief for Otepka was reported to develop an argument that a "get Otepka" effort had its beginnings when the Kennedy administration came into office.

It was said to cite testimony from Otepka to the effect that he was called into a meeting in December 1960 with Dean Rusk, secretary-designate in the new administration, and Robert F. Kennedy, choice of his brother-president for attorney general.

They were reported to have told Otepka that Rostow would be appointed to a State Department post and to have sought emergency clearance for Rostow without a field investigation.

Otepka was said to have balked and stated he knew of information in Central Intelligence Agency and Air Force files that made him feel a field investigation was advisable.

As to the Eisenhower administration's rejection of Rostow, the brief was reported to say he was rejected in 1955 by Herbert Hoover Jr., then undersecretary of state, and twice later by Rodenick O'Connor, then administrator of the department's

Hoover, now living in California, said, "Offhand, I don't know" when asked about the report.

O'Connor, reached in New York, said, "I do not recall this incident. I just do not remember it."

The Otepka case has been hanging fire for nearly four years. John F. Reilly, then a deputy assistant secretary of state, ordered Otepka dismissed in November 1963 on grounds of insubordination.

Otepka was accused of giving secret documents to the counsel for the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee.

Otepka has been fighting the

dismissal under Civil Service and State Department regulations. In the current phase, the brief went to Edward A. Dragon, a department hearings officer, after hearings in closed sessions. Dragon will make recommendations to Rusk.

If Rusk upholds the dismissal, Otepka could turn to the courts — a forum where many

of the allegations that have been heard behind closed doors might be aired publicly.

For the present, Otepka still is on the payroll at \$20,585 a year but says he has been given only demeaning tasks at the department.

Several Republican senators have evinced interest in the reports of what the brief contains and of what Otepka has testified at closed hearings.

Sen. Jack Miller, R-Iowa, put into the Congressional Record a story published by the Des Moines Register which said the brief outlines at least 18 cases of alleged laxity.

The story by Clark Mollenhoff said the cases cited included these four among the State

Department's 23,000 employees:

—A Foreign Service officer who sexually violated his own daughter but was never disciplined.

—A Foreign Service officer who forged an endorsement on an application for a credit union loan but nevertheless was later given an important assignment at the White House.

—A U.S. security officer stationed in Moscow who was never criticized or disciplined for going to the apartment of a Soviet woman agent where he was photographed by hidden cameras with his companion, who was nude. Soviet secret police tried to get him to spy for the Soviet Union.

—A Foreign Service officer who admitted homosexual tendencies yet was given supervision of Marine guard personnel and protection of safe combinations at a U.S. embassy.

In putting the story in the Record, Miller said, "One of the root causes of the Otepka case was the use of emergency clearance procedure by the State Department."



AP Wirephoto
WALT W. ROSTOW
"Continuous security."