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Delay in Security Probes Bared

Simpson Asserts 15 Cases Wait for 8 Years

BY WILLARD EDWARDS
(Chicago Tribune Press Service)

Washington, Oct. 6—Sen. Mil-

ward L. Simpson (R., Wyo.) charged today that at least 15 top-level state department officers were recommended for suspension or separation eight years ago on security grounds but have been retained without adequate investigation of the evidence against them.

Simpson said he was not questioning the loyalty or stability of the 15 officers but attacking "the unconscionable and ridiculous system under which these 15 could be retained by the state department without a complete reevaluation and investigation to clear up the original charges that led to recommendations for their dismissal or suspension."

Ten of the 15 officers, Simpson said, occupy government positions in grades between GS-13 and GS-16 [receiving salaries ranging from \$14,000 to \$18,000] and the other five hold higher grades.

"All Important Jobs"

"All hold jobs of substantial importance, including deputy assistant secretary of state, office director, first secretary of embassy, counsel general, and counsel," he said. "Foreign service officers are not unrepresented in the group of 15."

Simpson indicated that his information came from the records of the Senate internal security subcommittee, which has been conducting an investigation for almost three years

of the state department's office of security.

"I have been informed on unimpeachable authority that the subcommittee has amassed a great volume of testimony and evidence in support of my observations on loose security procedures in the state department," he said.

"The subcommittee, controlled by Democrats, has questioned scores of witnesses and accumulated bulky documentary evidence in executive sessions during nearly a three-year period. It has not published any of its findings and apparently does not propose to do so before the Nov. 3 election.

"The reason for the delay might be deduced from the statement by a member of the subcommittee that the hearings contain political dynamite. I think the American public is entitled, without further delay, to be informed of conditions bearing on our national security."

Hold Key Positions

All 15 state department officers hold highly sensitive and key positions, Simpson noted. He called up the state department to use "the clear remedy available" for determining if any of the individuals represent a security risk, instituting re-investigation and reevaluation of their security status.

The process should be extended to all state department officials and employees ever recommended for suspension or separation on security grounds, he asserted.

The 15 state department officers, Simpson said, were on a list of 800 potential security risks compiled in 1956 by the late Scott McLeod, then head of the security office. McLeod reported that 250 of the 800 were

seriously "questionable" in regard to the security responsibilities of the department and urged his superiors to take action to avoid the possibility of "another Alger Hiss case."

"Clearances Are Issued"

"Security procedures in the state department," Simpson said in a statement, "ostensibly prevent security risks from gaining access to sensitive posts or information. But top-level officers can overrule the security findings of subordinates.

"Numerous top-level clearances have been issued to overrule recommendations that certain people be suspended or separated. These have come even in the face of unanimous concurrences, favoring dismissal.

"It is clear that in such instances the mere act of ordering or issuing a clearance does not change the facts which led to the adverse recommendation in the first place. In every case during the last 10 years where a security clearance has been granted or ordered by the secretary of state, the secretary's action came as an arbitrary repudiation of the judgment of security conscious subordinates who had passed on the case."

Cites Otepka Ouster

Simpson said the dismissal of Otto F. Otepka, state department chief of security evaluations, had a "direct relationship" to the compilation of the list of security risks because Otepka was the "last top security officer still with the department from the days when McLeod ran its security."

Otepka was fired last year because he testified before the Senate internal security subcommittee and gave information on lax security in his branch.

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