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Reprisals Are Charged By Otepka Supporters

By DAVID BARNETT
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Congressional investigators are looking into charges that the State Department has demoted six security experts in "reprisal" for their support of Otto Otepka, suspended chief security evaluator.

Three of the men already have filed petitions with the Civil Service Commission contending that their transfers, from security assignments to administrative duties, constituted "reduction in rank."

Mr. Otepka now is fighting attempts of the State Department to fire him. He is accused of providing without authorization information to the Senate Internal Security subcommittee.

Evidence Called Contrived

John F. Norpel, jr., one of the men reassigned as an administrative officer in the bureau of inter-American affairs, contends in his petition to the Civil Service Commission that high State Department officials had "false-

ly contrived evidence created solely to harm Mr. Otepka."

Another of those who petitioned the Civil Service Commission, Harry M. Hite, contended that four of those transferred had been named to a special group by Mr. Otepka to review all personnel security cases.

"All have expressed their strong convictions concerning Mr. Otepka's innocence of wrongdoing with which he had been charged."

Two Others Reassigned

The other two reassigned, Mr. Hite said, also were supporters of Mr. Otepka.

The petitions were sent to Stephen L. Elliott, chief of the Civil Service Appeal Examining Office. The reassignments were made on March 15.

Mr. Hite, Mr. Norpel, Raymond Loughton and Billy N. Hughes, two of the others transferred, had intended to appear as witnesses friendly to Mr. Otepka at hearings on his discharge, Mr. Hite said.

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