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Members Release Testimony Which Denied Otepka Tap

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Washington, Jan. 2 — The Senate Internal Security Subcommittee today released testimony in which John F. Reilly, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Security, denied that a tap had been put into operation on the telephone of Otto T. Otepka, the department's chief security risk evaluator. Reilly, whose efforts to force Otepka's ouster led to his own resignation, appeared before the subcommittee November 15 to "amplify" earlier statements that had been challenged by senators.

"Darned Thing Didn't Work"
He acknowledged that an attempt had been made — by crossing wires — to turn Otepka's telephone mouthpiece into a microphone as part of the State Department's probe to discover if Otepka was leaking information to the subcommittee. But Reilly insisted that "the

darned thing didn't work, the experiment fizzled" and the only thing a colleague heard was a "hum."

This testimony, released for the first time today, has been questioned by Senator Dodd (D., Conn.), the subcommittee chairman, who has mentioned the possibility of perjury in the Otepka case.

Dodd told the Senate December 20 that Reilly and David I. Bellisle, an assistant, had testified that "none of Mr. Otepka's conversations had been overheard or compromised because of electronic difficulties."

Conflict Seen
According to the Connecticut Senator, these statements conflicted with the testimony of Elmer Dewey Hill, former director of the Division of Technical Service under Reilly, who also has resigned his Government post.

Dodd said Hill testified "that tape recordings had been made of several conversations, that Mr. Reilly had expressed particular interest in one conversation and that he had turned the tapes over to an unidentified third party at Mr. Reilly's direction."

Hill's testimony has not yet been released by the subcommittee.

But in the Reilly testimony issued today, the former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State was adamant in asserting that, to his knowledge, nobody had ever heard any words because of the wire-crossing on Otepka's telephone.

Exchange Cited
Reilly said he had ordered the tapping effort halted after carbon sheets had been found in Otepka's "burn bag" confirming suspicions that Otepka was turning over information to Jay Sourwine, the subcommittee counsel. The following exchange took place November 15:

Sourwine — Can you tell the committee positively that there has been no listening device of any kind, no change in normal hook-up or normal functions so as to permit listening, in the Office of Evaluations of the Office of Security, since the day on

which you found these seven sheets of carbon paper in the burn bag?

Reilly — I can state that categorically, and do so state.

"No Listening Device?"
Sourwine — You are stating now, without any attempt at evasion, that there has been no listening device of any kind, no microphone, no rigging of telephone wires, no conversion of a telephone to listening device, nothing of that sort in the division of evaluations since a date in March, 1963?

Reilly — That is correct. I so state. And I would like to say, at this time, if the committee has information to the contrary, I think the committee ought to look into it.

Sourwine — I do, too. The Otepka case has precipitated a clash between the State Department and the internal Security subcommittee over a number of issues.

Dismissal Charges Made
Otepka, as chief security evaluator, long has tried to insist on more stringent screening operations in the department — a policy that won sympathy in Congress but brought him into conflict with many other State Department officials.

When the State Department uncovered evidence indicating that Otepka was cooperating with Sourwine, dismissal charges were made on the ground that no Government agency can tolerate such insubordination.

The Dodd subcommittee had a different reaction.

Reilly, Hill Resigned
Feeling that the ability of Congress to obtain information from Government employees would be jeopardized if the Otepka dismissal were allowed to stand, it called hearings which led to the testimony of Reilly, Hill and Bellisle about the phone-tapping incident.

Reilly and Hill resigned their posts after the dispute in the Senate. Otepka, still in Government service, has been waiting

since mid-November for hearings on his appeal against dismissal.

In the testimony issued today, Reilly was rebuked by Senator McClellan (D., Ark.), who accused the former State Department security chief of not telling the truth about the attempt to listen to Otepka's conversations.

When Reilly replied that he had answered all questions factually but had not "volunteered" information under cross-examination, McClellan declared:

"This is a sad commentary. If we call people in high responsible positions in Government down here before this committee, trying to pursue our duties, and trying to get the truth, and then we find such evasion and such withholding and such technical excuses and alibis for not giving the committee the truth, I want to tell you gentlemen our task, our job, is tremendous beyond comprehension."

"I Get The Impression"
In a like vein, Senator Dodd told the witness:

"I get the impression you think in cross-examination it is allowable for one to be as evasive in his answers as he can possibly be without giving the whole answer and the whole truth."

Reilly asserted repeatedly, however, that he had tried to be precise in all his answers. He said, for example, that he had denied ordering or engaging in the tapping of Otepka's office because the bugging had never actually been carried out.

The former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State acknowledged, under questioning, that he might have said "semi-facetiously" in private conversation that he had been brought into the department to "get" Otepka.

But his primary concern, Reilly insisted, was the reverse question of whether Otepka would "get" him.