

'Top Figures' In Otepka 'Bug' Resign

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Associated Press

John F. Reilly, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Security, and Elmer D. Hill, head of the Division of Technical Services in Reilly's office, have resigned, the State Department said yesterday.

"The Department has accepted their resignation to be effective at an early date," press officer Richard I. Phillips said.

Reilly and Hill were sent on "administrative leave" last Tuesday, Nov. 12, after they admitted they installed a listening device in the office of Otto F. Otepka, a security officer dismissed by the State Department for insubordination.

Reilly, a prominent figure in the controversial Otepka case, first denied that a "bug" was installed in Otepka's office when the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee asked about it. Hill, an electronics expert, and David I. Belisle, Reilly's special assistant, have also denied the charge, but later all three wrote letters to the Subcommittee admitting that the device was installed.

Phillips, in announcing that Reilly and Hill have resigned, said that their resignations will be effective "probably sometime next month."

Asked why the date was unspecified, he said that "it is customary to allow certain lengths of time to wind up affairs."

Reilly and Hill are not on leave any more, Phillips explained, but they are "not engaged in any duties in the Department."

Phillips declined to answer other questions, including whether they were asked to resign.

Belisle was not sent on leave last week because he was absent when the listening

device was installed, though he acknowledged he was informed about the installation later.

"The inquiry is continuing as to the facts and circumstances surrounding the testimony of Belisle," Phillips said, in response to a question.

He added that with Reilly's resignation Belisle now is acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Security.

Otepka, charged with having turned over confidential security material to the Senate Subcommittee without authorization, has appealed his dismissal. The State Department now will prepare a list of officers and Otepka may choose one to act as hearing officer of his appeal.