

# State Dept. Aid Defends Action

## Explains Giving Secret Papers to Probers

BY WILLARD EDWARDS

Chicago Tribune Press Service  
Washington, Oct. 7

department security adviser, threatened with dismissal for unbecoming conduct, said today that he was being victimized for defending himself against false testimony by his superiors.

Otto F. Otepka, chief of the security evaluation division, bureau of security, was interviewed as he was preparing his formal, written reply to charges filed against him Sept. 23.

He was notified that he would lose his \$16,965 position in 30 days unless he could refute allegations that he had furnished classified information to the Senate internal security subcommittee.

### Explains His Action

The burden of Otepka's defense, he disclosed, is that he never furnished restricted information to the subcommittee until confronted with the record of testimony before the subcommittee which appeared to make him a liar under oath.

The only way to rebut this testimony, Otepka said, was to furnish "documentation" which he himself had classified as confidential in the first place. It was on the basis of this documentation that the subcommittee accused state department officials of "untruths under oath."

Otepka cleared away some of the mystery enveloping a case which has placed the full membership of the Senate judiciary committee, parent body of the internal security subcommittee, in a direct clash with Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

### Rusk Is Challenged

Rusk was given a virtual ultimatum by the committee to appear personally for questioning and lift a directive barring state department employees from giving information to the Senate, or suffer the consequences of a public expose.

This challenge was conveyed by Sen. Thomas J. Dodd [D., Conn.], appointed to represent the committee, who hand-delivered to Rusk a memorandum detailing evidence about lax security procedures in his department.

Rusk, who has been giving testimony for several months by pleading the pressures of

other business, quickly agreed to testify "in the near future." He is expected to appear in an executive session this week.

### Veteran in Security

Otepka is thus the involuntary center of a clash between congressional investigators and the executive department. How did he get there? This is his story:

He is 48 years old, a veteran in security affairs, who in 1958 received the state department's meritorious service award. A year ago, he was recommended for advanced executive training in the national war college.

He is the last survivor in the security division of a force built up in 1953 by the late Scott McLeod, who was appointed by President Eisenhower that year to tighten up security procedures. A government employee since 1936, Otepka was shifted from the Civil Service commission to the state department as a security expert with a flawless record.

When the Kennedy administration took over in 1961, the security division was reorganized. Otepka, who had been acting as deputy to McLeod, was demoted to chief of the evaluations branch altho his civil service rating and salary remained unchanged.

### Clash with Cleveland

He dates his troubles from a clash with Assistant Secretary of State Harlan Cleveland over appointment of a panel to study the operations of the security program. Otepka held that several of the proposed panel members should themselves undergo a Federal Bureau of Investigation screening on the basis of their records. He was overridden.

He also objected to the frequent use of "emergency security clearance" for appointive officials. The law provides that the secretary of state may use this process, permitting officials to serve immediately while their investigation was postponed.

Under Eisenhower, this procedure was used only five times. Rusk used it more than 150 times.

### Still on Payroll

Called before the Senate internal security subcommittee last year Otepka gave information which eventually blocked the appointment of William Wieland to a sensitive foreign post. Wieland was one of the department officials reluctant to admit the communist nature

of the Castro regime. He is still with the state department in a desk job.

When the subcommittee called Otepka to testify this year, he said, he furnished the investigators no classified documents altho, when asked, "I could not deny I had official knowledge of these cases."

### Superiors Are Called

"I testified, as always, with the department's permission and guidance and the personal knowledge of my superiors," he said. "I did not run to the subcommittee or its counsel, J. G. Sourwine, with information. When Mr. Sourwine's questions got into an area where I had knowledge, I could not and did not give 'substantive information' on individual cases."

Otepka did testify, however that certain of his superiors had specific knowledge of these cases. When the superiors were called, they denied that they had ever seen papers concerning these cases, as asserted by Otepka.

"This put their testimony in conflict with mine and with my official knowledge," Otepka said. "Their testimony was untrue. Since they had used the subcommittee forum to make their statements, I felt entitled to rebut their statements and present the true facts."

### Initiated by Officials

Otepka's rebuttal was called "iron-clad" by subcommittee members. He produced the documents about which his superiors had denied knowledge. They carried hand-written initials and notations by the officials who had denied ever seeing them.

"I did not seek the permission of my superiors to rebut their testimony," Otepka said. "That would be nonsense. I'm charged with violation of orders when all I did was defend myself."

CPYRIGHT

CPYRIGHT

FOIAb3b