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P. Russell, Richard B.
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WASHINGTON (UPI)--CHAIRMAN RICHARD B. RUSSELL OF THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HAS CLAIMED SOLE AUTHORITY FOR CONGRESSIONAL PEERING UNDER THE CLOAK OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA).

THE GEORGIA DEMOCRAT'S SUNDAY DISCLOSURE SHARPLY DEFINED THE BATTLE LINES FOR A VOTE TUESDAY ON WHETHER TO BRING MEMBERS OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE INTO THE HANDFUL OF CONGRESSMEN WHO OVERSEE THE CIA'S CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS.

RUSSELL CITED THE "RULES AND PRACTICES OF THE SENATE" IN POLITELY BUT FIRMLY REJECTING THE MOVE TO BROADEN CONGRESSIONAL CIA WATCHING IN A LETTER TO SEN. J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT, D-ARK.

FULBRIGHT, CHAIRMAN OF THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, HAS EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER CIA INVOLVEMENT IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY. ONE OF HIS GROUP'S COMMITTEEMEN, SEN. EUGENE J. MCCARTHY, D-MINN., SPONSORED THE RESOLUTION TO ENLARGE THE NUMBER OF MEN OVERSEEING CIA.

THE RUSSELL POSITION AS OUTLINED IN THE APRIL 30 LETTER WAS EXPECTED TO PROMPT A JURISDICTION FIGHT OVER THE CIA QUESTION IF AND WHEN IT REACHES THE SENATE FLOOR.

A TEXT OF THE RUSSELL LETTER WAS OBTAINED BY UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY, TWO DAYS BEFORE THE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE WAS EXPECTED TO ENDORSE A PROPOSAL TO PUT THREE OF ITS MEMBERS ON THE SPECIAL SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE THAT OVERSEES CIA OPERATIONS.

RUSSELL CLAIMS SOLE JURISDICTION FOR THE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE FOR SUPERVISING NON-BUDGETARY CIA MATTERS. THE INFORMAL WATCHDOG GROUP INCLUDES SEVEN SENIOR MEMBERS OF HIS AND THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEES.

IN AN APPARENT EFFORT TO CALM THE APPREHENSIONS OF FULBRIGHT AND OTHER CRITICS OF THE CIA'S HIDDEN POWER, RUSSELL SAID:

"I THINK I CAN STATE WITH ASSURANCE THAT THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF THE YEAR NO AGENCY OF THE GOVERNMENT SPENDS AS MUCH TIME BEFORE ITS OVERSIGHT AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEES AS DOES THE CIA."

THE RUSSELL ASSURANCES WERE NOT EXPECTED TO CHANGE FULBRIGHT'S OR MCCARTHY'S VIEW THAT THE CIA NEEDS CLOSER SUPERVISION.

BEYOND THAT IS A FEELING HELD BY SOME SENATORS THAT THE CIA ACTUALLY MAY BE MAKING FOREIGN POLICY INDEPENDENT OF THE ADMINISTRATION. THEY CITE THE CIA'S ROLE IN THE BAY OF PIGS DISASTER AS ONE PIECE OF EVIDENCE.

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