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Asks Study by Congress

Morse Wants Checkup on Spies

By NED CURRAN
(Herald Washington Bureau)

WASHINGTON—Rep. Bradford Morse (R., Lowell) wants Congress to get into the spy business.

Morse has introduced a joint resolution which would create a Joint Congressional Committee on Foreign Information and Intelligence to ride herd on the nation's cloak and dagger operation.

Continuing Studies

That is to say, in the language of the resolution:

"The Joint Committee shall make continuing studies of the activities of each information and intelligence agency of the United States; of the problems relating to the foreign information and intelligence programs; and of the problems relating to the gathering of information and intelligence affecting the national security and its coordination and utilization by the various departments, agencies and instrumentalities of the United States."

In launching the latest in a series of persistent Congressional attempts to pierce the shield of aloofness and secrecy surrounding executive branch intelligence agencies, Morse declared on the House floor:

"This is a resolution which would fill what is a gaping hole in the congressional mechanism for the formulation of foreign policy-making."

Morse said the hole is created not only by the diffusion of congressional checks on intelligence operations but also because of the ever widening circle of the agencies themselves.

The first step envisaged in Morse's resolution is to coordinate Congress' administration of intelligence within the one joint committee. This in turn would have as having a unifying effect on the intelligence efforts

Executive Arm

Morse and his partner in the undertaking, Rep. John Lindsay (R., N.Y.), feel Congress has a right to inquire more deeply and more fully into government intelligence despite the chronic argument that any intelligence agency is an arm of the President in whose exclusive province is the formulation of foreign policy. Intelligence helps the chief executive make policy, the argument goes.

Morse and Lindsay contend Congress looks into every other facet of government, has a responsibility to carry out the checks and balance system to the fullest and furthermore can be completely trusted even in the most delicate and security-ridden matters.

And what they consider most important, the intelligence operation, particularly as carried out by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), bears looking into. Morse and Lindsay proceeded to tick off CIA failures in Korea, Egypt, Laos and Cuba as proof of the need for a closer scrutiny.

They want therefore to look into such things as relations between the CIA and the State Department which often take on the aspect of right and left hands unaware of each other's moves; the connection between pure intelligence and active subversion; the recruiting and training of intelligence agents; and just how well intelligence is evaluated.

Morse and Lindsay cited many instances in these fields where there is obvious need for improvement.

Future in Doubt

The joint committee resolution is now germinating in the House rules committee where the air is pretty thin for such ideas. Its future is in considerable doubt.

The fact that this marks the tenth year, according to Lindsay, that such a move has been made in Congress can mean, however, that one of the tries is going to succeed.

Interestingly, in 1956 when a similar bill was debated on the Senate floor before it was rejected, one of the favorable votes was cast by the then senator from Massachusetts, John F. Kennedy. How he would vote after the experience of the seven years since then is an imponderable.

Under the surface, of course, is Congressional pique at not having any direct control over the CIA and its sister operations. Small subcommittees of both houses are briefed occasionally in great secrecy and then informally approve CIA appropriations which are then hidden in other money bills.

Sen. Leverett Saltonstall is a member of the Senate CIA subcommittee by virtue of his membership on the armed forces committee. And as an aide pointed out, he is so far satisfied with the access he has to intelligence information. If he wasn't, he would have introduced legislation like Morse's, the aide said.

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