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|---------------|--------------|---------------|---|
| Front Page | Edit Page | Other Page | 3 |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|---|

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CIA Watchdog Plea Renewed

By JOHN W. KULE

Journal Washington Bureau
Washington, D. C.—The central intelligence agency needs intensive supervision by congress more than ever before, Rep. Zablocki (D-Wis.) said Thursday.

However, the Milwaukee congressman conceded, his bill to create a permanent "watchdog" committee to oversee CIA activities again is foundering in the house rules committee.

Zablocki has been at this crusade for 13 years. He first introduced his bill in 1953 and has re-introduced it at the beginning of every two year congressional session since—seven times in all.

A similar piece of legislation once reached the senate floor, where it was killed, 59 to 27.

Never on House Floor

In the house, however, it never has escaped the rules committee. Chairman Howard W. Smith (D-Va.) usually has reflected the opposition of fellow southerners who dominate the house armed services committee.

For several years Zablocki considered Speaker Sam Rayburn and Rep. Carl Vinson of Georgia, long time armed services chairman, as his main obstacles.

Rayburn died and Vinson retired at the end of 1964. However, Zablocki has found that Speaker McCormack is less than enthusiastic about the bill and that Rep. Rivers (D-S. C.), the new armed services chairman, is more opposed than Vinson.

Support Unflagged

Nevertheless, Zablocki's support for the idea has not

flagged and he is encouraged by a gradual increase in support from colleagues. He seems to gain each time the CIA gets itself in some new hot water.

"There appears to be a growing crisis of confidence in our intelligence community," he told a joint committee studying congressional re-organization last year. "The public is becoming aware that its blank check has been cashed to finance some highly dubious enterprises."

Last September, in supporting Zablocki's bill, Rep. Kastenmeier (D-Wis.) said: "Congressional supervision is needed to assure that the standards of morality honored by American society are not completely undermined in the conduct of our international intelligence activities."

Laird, O'Konski Roles

CIA activities and finances—believed to approximate half a billion dollars a year—now are policed by several members of the house and senate armed services and appropriations committees.

The house appropriations committee is so secretive about the CIA that it refuses to divulge officially which of its members deal with the agency. However, it was learned that members of the defense appropriations subcommittee review CIA funds. Rep. Laird (R-Wis.) is a member of that group.

Rep. O'Konski (R-Wis.) is on the armed services subcommittee which handles the CIA.

In an interview Thursday, O'Konski supported Zablocki's bill. He said the armed services committee had enough to do supervising the huge military establishment without worrying about the CIA.

"Our subcommittee meets with CIA people every few weeks," O'Konski said. "They report to us only what they want to report and evade any questions outside of their prepared text."

"Won't Give Up Power"

O'Konski said Rivers and others committee leaders should give up the CIA to the new committee that would be created by Zablocki's bill.

"But they don't want to give up any power even though they don't have time to adequately supervise the CIA," he said.

Under the bill, the new committee would consist of seven house members and seven senators. No more than four from each house could be from the same political party.

In 1955 and 1961, Smith did hold hearings on the proposal. Zablocki thinks they should be held again.

"But the judge (Smith) says he will get to it in due time," Zablocki said. "That could mean tomorrow, next month or two years from now."

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