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Brzezinski Challenged About Billy

Adviser's Judgment Questioned by Panel

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A Senate subcommittee investigating Billy Carter concluded its public hearings yesterday by sharply questioning the judgment of Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's national security adviser, in using Billy Carter's Libyan ties in a diplomatic initiative during the early days of the Iranian hostage crisis.

Five of the nine senators on the panel charged that Brzezinski, by asking the president's brother to arrange a White House meeting with a Libyan diplomat last November, had encouraged Libya to try to buy Billy Carter's influence with the promise of a lucrative oil deal and \$220,000 in payments.

"What may have just been a routine meeting to you turned out to be a quarter of a million dollars for Billy Carter," Sen. Robert Dole, R-Kan., told Brzezinski.

Echoing Dole's charge, Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., said: "I think having sat here for several weeks listening to testimony and reading depositions, one could easily reach the conclusion that the result of the meeting was to enrich Billy Carter whether intended or not."

In an unprecedented appearance before a congressional investigating panel, Brzezinski spent eight hours sparring with senators as he defended his dealings with Billy Carter. The session was marked by temper flareups and theatrics that made it the most spirited day of hearings since the star witness, Billy Carter, appeared before the senators last month.

In other developments, the subcommittee:

- Announced that it will take a deposition from Billy Carter next week in an effort to resolve discrepancies between his testimony and that of top Justice Department and other officials.

- Released new telephone records showing that Billy Carter was in contact with oil company officials minutes after Brzezinski, on the basis of intelligence reports, admonished him for attempting to negotiate an oil deal with Libya.

- Produced a deposition in which former Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance differed with Brzezinski's version of how Vance took the news of Billy Carter's role in arranging a White House meeting between Brzezinski and a Libyan diplomat to discuss the Iranian hostage crisis.

In his testimony, Brzezinski called "preposterous" any suggestion that he or anyone else in the White House ever intended "to enhance Billy Carter's opportunity for commercial advantage in his relations with Libya."

Brzezinski said his first contact with Billy Carter was late last November when, at the suggestion of First Lady Rosalynn Carter, he asked the president's brother to set up a meeting between himself and the chief Libyan diplomat in Washington, Ali Houderi.

The meeting was held in Brzezinski's office Nov. 27. Nine days later Houderi returned for an Oval Office meeting with President Carter.

Brzezinski said the Nov. 27 session "was a part of our international campaign to enervate pressure on behalf of the safety, and, if possible, the release of the hostages. This contact was undertaken with the knowledge of both the president and the secretary of state at a time of extreme danger to the hostages."

He said that when he informed Vance of Billy Carter's role in arranging the meeting, the then-secretary of state said "something like, 'Well, no harm in trying.'"

In his deposition to the subcommittee, however, Vance has a different recollection of his reaction. Vance told Senate investigators that he assumed Billy Carter was off on a private initiative and at the time he said he was skeptical of the attempt.

Brzezinski replied: "Skepticism describes a state of mind. He did not show skepticism to me. He said it was worth trying, or something like that."

The national security adviser said Billy Carter's effort had a "negligible impact" on the situation and "on balance I would have been happier if it had not taken place."

He said he still considers the use of Billy Carter's Libyan contacts "justified under the prevailing circumstances" and added that "we had an obligation to try every orthodox and unorthodox means" of trying to win release of the American hostages.

"There was a clear risk in using him, but I had no idea at the time whatsoever that he was engaged in financial dealings (with Libya)," Brzezinski said.

Asked by one senator why he had not used normal diplomatic channels to set up the Houderi meeting, Brzezinski replied: "The issue was not the absence of contacts with the Libyans. The issue was that the contacts up to that point had not produced results."

Brzezinski, asked for his assessment of Billy Carter's Libyan activities, called them "counterproductive, uncalled for and in some respects reprehensible."

He added, "I see some potential harm to our national interest, given the relationship of brother to brother."

Brzezinski said his second major contact with Billy Carter came on March 31 when he received an intelligence report from CIA Director Stansfield Turner on the oil deal the president's brother was negotiating between Libya and the Charter Oil Co. of Jacksonville, Fla.

He said he telephoned Billy Carter in Georgia and told him: "In the course of my work a lot of information flows across my desk, and I've recently seen information that you are engaged in business activities" that could be embarrassing to the president.

Carter's response, he said, was "somewhat less than gracious in the substance and in the tone."

Some senators, including Chair-

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