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±±±R258

U A1199)1BYLWYDRYR

±‡BUSH±

‡BY RANJIT DE SILVA±

WASHINGTON, MARCH 31, REUTER - CIA DIRECTOR GEORGE BUSH TODAY TOLD CONGRESS TODAY THAT CERTAIN ASPECTS OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION TO REFORM U.S. INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES WOULD UNNECESSARILY HINDER AMERICA'S FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS.

HE SAID THAT WHILE THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY WELCOMED STRONG CONGRESSIONAL SUPERVISION OF ITS OPERATIONS, CONGRESS MUST ENSURE THAT IT ENHANCED RATHER THAN HINDERED VITAL INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS.

''ALTHOUGH THERE IS MUCH TO BE ADMIRED (IN THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION),'' HE TOLD THE SENATE RULES COMMITTEE, ''I AM CONCERNED THAT CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THIS RESOLUTION WOULD UNNECESSARILY HINDER OUR FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE EFFORT.''

THE COMMITTEE IS CONSIDERING VARIOUS REFORMS PROPOSALS, INCLUDING THE CREATION OF A PERMANENT SENATE COMMITTEE TO OVERSEE THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.

MR. BUSH, WHO TOOK OVER AS CIA DIRECTOR EARLIER THIS YEAR, SAID THE LEGISLATION HEIGHTENED THE RISK OF LEAKS OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION.±

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±‡BUSH 2 WASHINGTON±

HE SAID THE PAST YEAR'S INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY HAD BROADED CONGRESSIONAL ACCESS TO SENSITIVE MATERIAL AND RESULTED IN AN UNPRECEDENTED NUMBER OF LEAKS OF SECRET INFORMATION.

''I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT DETAILS OF INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS CAN BE SPREAD THIS WIDELY, FOR GUARANTEED SECRECY REMAINS A PREREQUISITE TO SUCCESS IN MANY OF OUR ACTIVITIES,'' HE SAID.

''OUR TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES ARE NULLIFIED, AND OUR OWN OFFICERS AS WELL AS FOREIGN HUMAN SOURCES ARE SENSELESSLY ENDANGERED,'' MR. BUSH ADDED.

OVER

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HE NOTED THAT THE PROPOSED BILL DID NOT CHANGE CURRENT PROCEDURES WHICH REQUIRE THE CIA TO REPORT COVERT ACTIONS TO THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS, ARMED SERVICES AND FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEES.

HE ALSO URGED THE PANEL TO DELETE A PROVISION THAT WOULD LET THE PROPOSED SENATE COMMITTEE PUBLISH DETAILS OF SECRET OPERATIONS, EVEN OVER PRESIDENTIAL OBJECTIONS, IF SENATORS FELT SUCH OPERATIONS WERE ILL-ADVISED.

MORE 1427

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BUSH 3 WASHINGTON

HE SAID THIS PROVISION WOULD IMMEDIATELY PLACE CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH "IN AN ADVERSARY RELATIONSHIP AND WOULD DETRACT FROM GOOD OVERSIGHT," OR REVIEW OF INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS.

QUESTIONED BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS, MR. BUSH SAID PRESIDENT FORD WOULD PROBABLY ALSO OPPOSE THE BILL IN ITS PRESENT FORM.

THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION RAN INTO EARLY DIFFICULTIES IN CONGRESS AS SENIOR MEMBERS OF SEVERAL COMMITTEES DECLARED THEY WOULD NOT RELINQUISH THEIR CURRENT JURISDICTION OVER INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES.

DEMOCRATIC SENATOR JOHN STENNIS OF MISSISSIPPI, CHAIRMAN OF THE POWERFUL SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, WHICH REVIEWS CIA AND MILITARY INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES AND APPROVES FUNDS FOR THESE AGENCIES, VOWED HE WOULD FIGHT TO THE END TO RETAIN HIS PANEL'S AUTHORITY.

SENIOR REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE MADE SIMILAR PLEDGES FOR THEIR COMMITTEE'S JURISDICTION OVER THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION AND THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT.

REUTER 1429

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