Approved For Release 2007/06/21 : CIA-RDP99-00498R000100050133-2

STAT

H

NUCLEAR

WASHINGTON (AP) -- MEMBERS OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE SAID TODAY THAT DESPITE NEW ESTIMATES THAT THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS SPENDING MORE FOR WEAPONS, IT IS TOO SOON TO JUDGE WHETHER IT SEEKS NUCLEAR SUPERIORITY OR SIMPLY WANTS TO STAY EVEN WITH THE UNITED STATES.

CIA DIRECTOR GEORGE BUSH BRIEFED THE COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE OF SOVIET STRENGTH AND INTENTIONS, WHICH DIFFERS WITH THE RECENTLY-DISCLOSED FINDINGS OF AN INDEPENDENT TEAM OF NONGOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS.

THE NONGOVERMENTAL TEAM, HEADED BY PROF. RICHARD PIPES OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY, ADVANCED A WORST CASE THEORY THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS ATTEMPTING TO GAIN AN EDGE OVER THE UNITED STATES IN NUCLEAR CAPABILITY OVER THE NEXT DECADE.

THE OFFICIAL, AND GENERALLY ACCEPTED, VIEW IS SAID TO BE THAT THE RUSSIANS ARE NOT MOVING IN THAT DIRECTION, BUT ARE COMPLYING WITH AGREEMENTS TO EXPAND NUCLEAR STRENGTH AT A RATE OF ABOUT 10 PER CENT ANNUALLY, ABOUT EQUAL TO THE U.S. RATE.

ULTIMATELY THE COMMITTEE HOPES TO REACH A CONCLUSION ON WHETHER THE SOVIET INTENTION IS NUCLEAR PARITY OR SUPERIORITY, AND DECIDE WHETHER TO RECOMMEND CHANGES IN U.S. NUCLEAR POLICY.

SEN. HUBERT HUMPHREY, D-MINN., SAID THE COMMITTEE HAD RECEIVED FRESH INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES OF HOW MUCH OF THE SOVIET UNIONS GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT IS GOING INTO WEAPONS, AND THE ESTIMATES ARE UP FROM WHAT THEY WERE A YEAR AGO.

HUMPHREY SAID THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT THE UNITED STATES IS AHEAD IN THE ARMS RACE NOW. BUT HE SAID IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT THE RUSSIANS HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN A MILITARY BUILDUP SINCE 1973, ESPECIALLY IN HIGH TECHNOLOGY IN WHICH IT HAS LAGGED BEHIND THE UNITED STATES.

LOOKING INTO THE 1980S, ITS A QUESTION WHETHER WE CAN MAINTAIN THAT EDGE, OR ARE WILLING TO MAINTAIN THAT EDGE, HUMPHREY SAID.

THATS WHERE THE ISSUE COMES IN OF WHETHER THE RUSSIANS ARE ENGAGED IN A PROGRAM OF MILITARY SUPERIORITY. I THINK WE CANNOT REALLY DETERMINE THAT. I DONT THINK THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY REALLY FEELS THAT IS THE CASE, BUT THERE IS OBVIOUSLY DISSENT WITHIN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY, SAID HUMPHREY.

SEN. CHARLES PERCY, R-ILL., WHO REQUESTED THE HEARINGS, SAID THE COMMITTEE NEEDS TO GATHER MORE DATA BEFORE MAKING ITS POSITION KNOWN. HE SAID SOME OF THE INFORMATION COLLECTED IN THE HEARINGS MAY BE MADE PUBLIC.

0118 1757PAS

Approved For Release 2007/06/21 : CIA-RDP99-00498R000100050133-2