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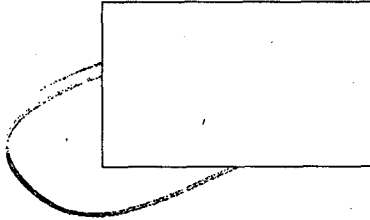
PRESS ITEM FOR THE DCI

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Attached is a story about the Agency that appeared in the Chicago Tribune last Sunday. Thuermer and Maury have copies.



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Comment:

These comments represent the initial and tentative reaction of the [redacted] to the attached item from the news services.

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CHICAGO TRIBUNE - 11 FEBRUARY 1973

Is the CIA being undercut?

By Saul Friedman

WASHINGTON—Of all the brains washed in the whirlpool of the Viet Nam war, those in the Central Intelligence Agency have come out, well, relatively clean.

When the Pentagon was telling us that all the fight was about out of the North Vietnamese and the National Liberation Front, the CIA was not so sanguine.

AND LONG BEFORE then Secretary

of Defense Robert McNamara was admitting it in public, the CIA was saying that bombing would not significantly hamper the ability of the North Vietnamese to fight.

All of which means that when its airline wasn't busy shuttling opium, the CIA was right on its assessments of the war, at least some of the time. And it displayed some independent thought.

But even that limited record of success may be jeopardized in the future, says Rep. Lucien Nedzi (D., Mich.), Democratic chairman of the House subcommittee which oversees intelligence operations.

Nedzi has spent more than a year in a private, intensive study of the nation's intelligence organizations, especially the CIA.

And now that its director, Richard Helms, whom Nedzi considered a professional with no political axes to

grind, has been banished to the desert—as ambassador to Iran—the congressman worries that the White House is about to “compromise the integrity” of the agency.

More specifically, Nedzi and other members of Congress are concerned that the agency may become a handmaiden of administration and Pentagon policy, telling the White House only what it wishes to hear.

SEVERAL MEMBERS of congressional armed services committees, including Nedzi, know how the White House and the Pentagon have juggled their own intelligence estimates of Soviet strength—while ignoring more accurate CIA figures—to justify requests for new weapons systems.

You may remember the frightening Department of Defense estimates of the Soviet SS-9 intercontinental missile, which were used as the prime argu-

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ment for the antiballistic missile system. Well, the ABM has all but sunk from sight—and so has the threat of the SS-9.

Evidence that the White House may be moving to take over the CIA for its own purposes came to Nedzi last year when the President announced an intelligence reorganization to increase efficiency, eliminate waste, duplication, and severe interagency feuding.

Nedzi concedes that more coordinating and reorganization may be necessary. But he learned that none of the agencies, not even the CIA, had been consulted about the reorganization.

The White House, when it announced the reorganization, kept secret the name of the man who planned it. It since has been learned that the author of the plan was James R. Schlesinger, Helms' successor.

Schlesinger has assured concerned members of the Senate Armed Services Committee that the CIA, under his directorship, will remain independent. But skepticism remains.