

'Gap' In Intelligence Put In Critics' Minds

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Mahon Also Says Administration Let Itself Be Goaded Into Baring Secret Data

By PETER J. KUMPA

(Washington Bureau of The Sun)

Washington, March 7—A top congressional defense expert today called upon the Administration and Congress, the press and the people, to end careless and loose talk that he said was ruining American intelligence efforts.

Representative Mahon (D., Texas), chairman of the special Military Appropriations subcommittee, called the present situation "outrageous and intolerable."

He included both parties and both the executive and legislative branches of Government in his angry criticism delivered on the House floor shortly after it opened its session.

"Revealing Secrets"

"There has been talk of an intelligence gap," said Mahon. "There is an intelligence gap. The gap is in the intelligence of those who are daily revealing the secrets of the intelligence operations of the United States Government."

"Critics have made public statements on matters which should never be discussed in public," said Mahon.

"The Administration has mis-



REPRESENTATIVE MAHON
"Anonymity is part of job"

takenly allowed itself to be goaded into revealing information detrimental to our best interests," he added.

A top-ranking legislator on the special subcommittee handling intelligence, Mahon did not mention names as he complained about high-ranking intelligence officers being quoted in the public press.

"These are men who, from the standpoint of the general public should neither be seen nor heard," Mahon declared. "A passion for anonymity is an integral part of their jobs."

"Headlines are not so precious as to warrant jeopardizing our national security," he added.

In the last two weeks, John C. McCone, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and the three chiefs of the separate military agencies have all testified before congressional committee, with at least part of their testimony made public.

McCone told of the 1,000 to 1,500 Latin Americans trained in ideology or guerrilla warfare or both in Cuba last year.

Maj. Gen. Alva R. Fitch, Army intelligence chief, told a Senate committee recently that Russians appear to be storing complex and modern arms, though not missiles, in Cuba caves.

The Air Force intelligence chief, Maj. Gen. Robert A. Breitweiser, testified about aerial reconnaissance of Cuba to the same committee recently by Sen. Stennis (D., Miss.).

Rear Adm. Vernon L. Lowrance, Chief of Naval Intelligence, last month testified that it was the Navy that was responsible for the first tip that caused a step-up in observation and eventual discovery of the offensive Soviet build-up in Cuba. The Navy became suspicious over the sudden increase in Soviet shipping.

Called By Committees

The military men as well as McCone did not volunteer, but were called up by the congressional committees.

So Mahon blamed not only them but senators and congressmen who were discussing matters publicly that should have been talked about behind closed doors.

While most of the recent discussion of intelligence activities has revolved around the partisan issue of Cuba, including both the 1961 abortive Bay of Pigs invasion and the October, 1962, missile showdown with the Soviet Union, Mahon blamed the "deterioration of secrecy" for the 1960 U-2 incident.

"Priceless Advantage"

The Texas Democrat asserted, however, that blame for the past was not important as activity for the future.

"To be successful," he said, "intelligence activities must be secret. To let the enemy know just how many of his secrets we know and just which ones we do know, gives him a priceless advantage."

"Today's headlines may cost the lives of the human sources of information," he continued.

"The enemy can find our intelligence sources much more easily when he knows what we have found out. This knowledge helps to pinpoint the location of intelligence activities, and once knowing the location, the discovery of means is much easier and as a result intelligence sources dry up."

Mahon concluded that "immaturity and indiscretion" in "constant disclosures" was making the United States the "laughing stock of the world."

"Officials in Moscow, Peking and Havana must applaud our

spend huge sums of money endeavoring to obtain," the congressman said.

"Let us be silent with respect to these sensitive matters," he said.

He did not mention the host of Republicans who have led the way in disclosing intelligence data on Cuba, led by Senator Keating (R., N.Y.).

Nor did he mention Democratic officials such as Robert F. Kennedy, Attorney General, whose disclosure of other information placed the Administration in a kinder light.

"Coordination Required"

Mahon did single out McCone who is charged by law with protecting intelligence sources and methods for unauthorized disclosure.

"I call on him to fully carry out the difficult and important duties of his office in this respect," said the Texas Democrat. "A government-wide coordination of effort is required."

Mahon admitted that the American people were interested in intelligence activities, particularly in the "mystery and aura" that surrounded the business.

But he warned that the country was not playing games in intelligence.

"Further Erosion"

"Our national survival to a great extent depends upon our knowledge of our enemies' activities," said Mahon. "The price we pay for the luxury of public disclosure of intelligence activities is the further erosion of our capabilities in this field."

Mahon said it was difficult enough getting information from closed Communist societies. Publicity on the intelligence made it more difficult, he added.

Representative Rogers (D., Fla.) today continued his daily demands that a joint congressional watchdog committee be set up to review the work of CIA.

Part of his reasoning is similar to Mahon's, simply to protect intelligence secrecy.