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Washington Angle

State Department 'Mess'

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WASHINGTON—A memorandum from the Senate Judiciary Committee charging laxity at the State Department security agency and indicating possible perjury by some department officials has been handed over to Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

The document, and a covering letter from the committee chairman, Sen. James O. Eastland, D-Miss., were presented to Rusk by Sen. Thomas J. Dodd, D-Conn., who made a special trip for that purpose to New York City, where Rusk has been meeting with foreign secretaries.

The covering letter put the secretary of state on warning that the committee's internal security subcommittee would release the results so far of its investigation of security practices in the department if Rusk did not cooperate in the subcommittee's study. The department has directed employees not to testify in the inquiry.

The memorandum detailed some of the information turned up in months of investigation and closed hearings by the internal security subcommittee. It charged that at least one State Department employe had told "untruths under oath" in the executive hearings.

The memo was approved by the full Senate Judiciary Committee at a secret session. Because of the nature of the document — one source said it showed conditions in the security agency were a "mess, at best" —

The committee ordered it hand delivered to Rusk. Sen. Dodd was picked for the job as vice chairman of the internal security subcommittee. He was accompanied on the trip by Jay Sourwine, counsel to the subcommittee.

Much of the case developed by the subcommittee involves information provided during executive sessions by Otto F. Otepka, a veteran security officer who is under charges by the department to remove him from his job as chief of the evaluations branch of the security agency.

One committee source said Otepka's testimony was backed up by official documents.

The State Department charges against Otepka involve declassification of documents and

preparations of questions used by the subcommittee in interrogating other state department officials. A committee source said the questions were prepared to help bring out contradictions in testimony previously given.

Behind the memo to Rusk are two issues:

1.—Concern over State Department laxity in handling security matters.

2.—Concern over what the senators consider an administration attempt to "get" Otepka for "providing" truthful answers in the investigation, and the State Department's general unwillingness to give the subcommittee information the senatorial group thinks it has a legal right and constitutional obligation to get.

At the New York meeting, Rusk was reported to have gone over the memorandum in about 10 minutes. He made no immediate reply and none was requested.

The investigation by the subcommittee goes back many

months. Early in the summer, members of the subcommittee decided the conditions in the security agency had been described in such terms that Rusk should be asked to counter or explain them in person.

The secretary of state, pleading the press of other business, delayed his appearance several times. The last date for his appearance, last Aug. 30, also was canceled. He has not appeared.

By that time, the department had started its own investigation which blossomed into a letter of charges on Sept. 23 accusing Otepka of "conduct unbecoming an officer of the state department." Otepka has until Oct. 13 to answer the charges.

At the full meeting of the committee last week, it was reported, some early objections were raised to the memorandum by Sen. Philip A. Hart, D-Mich., and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass. After some minor changes, however, it was approved without audible dissent.