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HOUSE INTERNAL SECURITY COMMITTEE

The right of the individual to cast hi's ballot in secret is one of the treasured rights of American citizens. However, under most rules of parliamentary procedure, secret votes are not allowed.

The principle behind this difference is sound. When you cast your own vote, you should not have to answer to anybody for your decision. But when some other person votes for you in a legislative body, you have a right to know how he voted. He should not be given the opportunity to vote one way behind closed doors, and then tell his constituents he voted the opposite.

Faced with this duty of disclosure, Congressmen have developed several dodges for avoiding roll-call votes on what they consider legislative "hot potatoes." One method was used in securing the Congressional pay raise. Congress passed a law that made future raises automatic unless overridden by a negative vote.

A different parliamentary trick was used by those who abolished the House Internal Security Committee in 1975. The anti-security .Congressmen wrote the elimination of the Committee into House rules that could not be amended from the floor. When the House adopted its rules of procedure, the Committee was wiped out without a roll-call vote on the merfts.

There is no evidence that the American people or even a majority of Congressmen wanted to abolish the House Internal Security Committee. Every time there was a test vote on this issue, it was overwhelmingly approved.

The House Internal Security Committee and its predecessor, called the Committee on Un-American Activities, had a distinguished record dating back to 1938. This is the Committee that uncovered a major Soviet spy ring which included. hlghly-placed government agents such as Alger Hiss fn the State Department.

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Other investigations of this Committee in the 1940s and 1950s revealed Soviet penetration in education, labor, and communications. The CIO, for example, relied heavily on the Committee's investigations in expelling a number of Communist-dominated unions.

Those responsible for abolishing the Committee argued that we no longer need a Congressional committee investigating threats to our internal security. On the contrary, it looks like we need such investigations more than ever before.

Terrorist and revolutionary bombings inside the United States are now running at the rate of at least 2,000 per year. Many of these crimes, such as the bombing of LaGuardia Airport, have never been solved. The Hanafi Muslim capture of more than a hundred hostages in our nation's capital and the FALN bombing of Fraunces Tavern in New York are among the famous terrorist crimes of the last several years.

Three months ago, Carl Heiser was arrested for trying to turn over to the Soviets vital parts of our cruise missile. Six months ago, another American, Christopher Boyce was convicted of stealing top-secret microfilms of electronic equipment which were delivered to the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City.

The escalation of domestic and international terrorism and espionage makes it necessary that we have a Congressional committee, capably staffed, in order to investigate the problem and devise means of coping with it.

Those opposed to the House Internal Secu ff]}Jdfffrnain that it did not produce enough legislation to justify its existence. This is no,argument against a Congressional committee. Examples of committees that were purely investigative and not legislative at all are the Watergate Commfttee and the Kennedy/King Assassination Committee.

A bipartisan effort is being made by Congressmen John Ashbrook (R.,O.) and Larry McDonald (D.,Ga.) to re-establish the House Internal Security Committee. Their bill already has 149 co-sponsors. Its popularity is increasing rapidly.

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