

Church Says CIA Chief Pledges Help

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By Spencer Rich

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Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), chosen yesterday as chairman of the Senate Committee to investigate alleged intelligence agency abuses, said he had received a phone call from CIA Director William Colby pledging cooperation with the committee inquiry.

Church was elected unanimously by the committee's six Democrats at a closed organizational meeting yesterday. The five Republican members are expected to choose John G. Tower of Texas as committee vice chairman.

Church said the Democratic members discussed immediate steps needed to obtain a staff director and general counsel, and agreed that strict secrecy must be maintained over national security secrets.

He dodged a question on whether former President Nixon would be called before the committee. "It is much too early to tell which witnesses will be called," he said.

He again pledged that "we are not going to conduct a vendetta" against the CIA, FBI or any of the other intelligence agencies whose alleged abuses of power and illegal spying on civilians the new committee will investigate "but neither will there be a whitewash."

Church said that on Monday, just after the Senate voted 82 to 4 to create the new committee and Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) announced the names of the Democratic members, he received a phone call from Colby promising to give full cooperation to the committee in its inquiry into the CIA.

Such cooperation—as well as preservation of all documents relevant to the inquiry—was formally requested of Colby, the Justice Department, the FBI, the Pentagon, the Treasury and several other government agencies in letters sent out by Mansfield as majority leader. They bade the agencies to preserve all memos, records and other documents that might be needed.

Church said that in the long

run nothing is as harmful to the CIA, FBI and other agencies "as lack of public confidence when charges are made" of abuse of powers. He said the Senate committee inquiry would probably restore such confidence by pruning abuses.

Church, joking with reporters, recalled an early brush with the CIA:

"Six or seven years ago I sent a messenger to the CIA with a message—and they impounded the messenger. He called me and said they had detained him and were questioning him and what should he do? I told him to come back and we'd mail the message."