

Senate CIA Probe Sets Security

By George Lardner Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Operations has started its work amid strict security precautions and does not expect to hold any public hearings before June.

A spokesman for Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), the committee chairman, said yesterday that a round-the-clock police guard has already been posted at the committee's offices in the basement of the Dirksen Senate Office Building where the Senate Watergate committee used to be headquartered.

Committee staff members will not be permitted to take any classified documents out of those offices, Church's press secretary, Bill Hall, reported. Staffers have also been ordered not to discuss the committee's work with outsiders unless they have "prior approval of a superior," Hall said.

"The only people permitted to work in the secure area are those who have been cleared," Hall added. "For example, I can't get in there myself."

Church hopes to begin public hearings sometime in June, Hall said. The committee staff will probably begin taking depositions for the inquiry next week.

The investigation of the Central Intelligence Agency and the rest of the federal government's intelligence community is expected to include a close look at the CIA's alleged involvement in assassination plots aimed at foreign political leaders.

The agency has denied that it ever assassinated anyone, but it has acknowledged privately that attempts may have been made by people who were in close contact with CIA officers. "There were some things that were a little close to the edge," one high-ranking CIA official said recently.

Church has said that if there is any truth to the allegations, remedial legislation may be needed. Except in wartime, Church has said, no government agency should have such license.