

Butterfield Not CIA Spy, Church Says

By George Lardner Jr.
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Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho) said yesterday there is "no scintilla of evidence" that former Nixon White House aide Alexander Butterfield ever served there as a spy for the Central Intelligence Agency.

"We have found no evidence to support such a charge," Church told reporters. "In fact, all of the evidence is directly contrary to such a charge."

Former Defense Department intelligence officer L. Fletcher Prouty claimed last week that he had been told in 1971 that Butterfield was a White House "contact man" with the CIA. Butterfield denied it flatly as did several of the individuals whom Prouty had cited as sources for his statement.

The chairman of the Senate intelligence committee, Church said the committee staff had questioned both Prouty and CIA Director William E. Colby on the question in the past week. The Idaho Democrat said Butterfield never even served as a liaison officer at the White House to deal with the CIA.

"I think that on close interrogation, Mr. Prouty is unable to substantiate his earlier statement and acknowledges this to be the case," Church said. He said he was announcing the finding now in the interest of fairness both to the CIA and to Butterfield.

The Senate committee, meanwhile, continued its investigation of CIA plots and attempts to assassinate foreign leaders. Church said the CIA may have been acting "like a rogue elephant on a rampage" in embarking on such schemes.

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Church: Butterfield No Spy

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With the assassination inquiry nearing a close and a public report expected sometime this summer, Church said the committee has yet to find any "hard evidence" directly tying any former President or former Attorney General—such as the late Robert F. Kennedy—to the CIA's participation in assassination efforts.

John Eisenhower, son of the late President Eisenhower, said after a closed committee meeting yesterday that he was confident the CIA never proposed any assassinations to his father and that the spy agency would have been slapped down quickly if the subject had been raised.

"I think 'contempt' is a good word for it," he said when asked what President Eisenhower's reaction would have been.

Assistant White House staff secretary for the last two years of the Eisenhower administration, Eisenhower acknowledged that assassination proposals might have been discussed at meetings of the high-level "Special Group," a National Security Council subcommittee in charge of covert CIA operations.

Known then as the 5412 Committee, it consisted of top officials of the State and Defense departments and the CIA and was headed by White House national security adviser Gordon Gray.

"I thought that I should have been allowed to sit in on the thing, and I was denied," Eisenhower said. "And I have a little heartburn as a result. That's why I remember this thing very, very clearly . . . They could have seen something like that without my knowing it."

Eisenhower said he was certain, though, that "it never went to the boss." He said he was so close to his father that "I don't see how he could have done anything without my knowing it . . . anything of a significant international nature like this."

Besides Eisenhower, who had asked to appear as a witness, the committee took additional testimony yesterday from former CIA Director Richard Helms, now U.S. ambassador to Iran, and former Kennedy White House aide Richard Goodwin.

Goodwin concluded his appearance at the executive session with a sharp attack on Vice President Rockefeller for

public statements implying that President Kennedy had authorized or condoned some assassination efforts.

The former Kennedy aide accused Rockefeller of "defaming" a dead President, partly to damage the political career of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), partly to divert public attention from other illegal CIA activities.

"Underneath these motives," Goodwin charged, "is another reality: the CIA has acted with great diligence to protect Rockefeller economic and financial interests throughout the world."

A Rockefeller aide called the attack a combination of "low shots" and said the Vice President had only been trying to explain to the public why the Rockefeller commission report did not include any findings on the assassination issue.

"He wasn't thinking about smearing the Kennedys, or about Teddy or about his . . . (family's) interests in Chile," the aide said of Rockefeller. "He was just trying to explain why the report did not contain a step-by-step scenario of efforts to assassinate Castro. Unfortunately these happened when the Kennedys and Goodwin were in power."