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Senator Frank Church in his Washington office in front of a portrait of a predecessor, the late William E. Borah.

Head of C.I.A. Inquiry

Frank Forrester Church

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By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

WASHINGTON, Jan. 29—

The dominant feature of the decor in the Capitol Hill office of Senator Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho, is a large oil portrait of a Republican predecessor, the late William E. Borah. It is less surprising than it might seem.

In different eras, Senator Borah and Senator Church emerged from the same landlocked Mountain State as outspoken critics of United States intervention in the affairs of other nations—Mr. Borah as the leading advocate of isolationism until his death in 1940 and Mr. Church as an early advocate of disengagement from the war in Southeast Asia. Both Idahoans were domestic liberals whose views often clashed with a majority of their constituents. And both were regarded as among the most polished orators of their times.

The selection yesterday of Mr. Church to chair a special Senate committee investigating the conduct of United States intelligence agencies may provide the most difficult test yet of the Senator's effort to live up to his own reverential image of William Borah.

The new panel, officially called the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities, has been given nine months and \$750,000 to examine charges that the Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and perhaps other Government information-gathering agencies have exceeded statutory limits on

their authority. The task, Senator Church said in an interview, will be to balance legitimate national security interests with "the right of people to know what, if any, transgressions have taken place."

An Informed Critic

In search of that goal, Mr. Church brings to the panel both a familiarity with the workings of the intelligence community and a record of criticism of some alleged abuses. He has served for 16 years on the Foreign Relations Committee, whose members are privy to secret briefings on intelligence data. Two years ago, Mr. Church's Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations undertook well-publicized hearings that disclosed, among other matters, the involvement of the C.I.A. in efforts to undermine the socialist Government of the late President Salvador Allende Gossens in Chile.

Mr. Church, now 50 years old, yet still deceptively boyish with only a tinge of gray in his long dark hair, began his Government service as an intelligence agent of sorts. As a young Army officer in World War II, he was in charge of producing daily intelligence estimates of Japanese troop strength for allied forces stationed in China. "I was not involved in the cloak and dagger work," he said.

Elected last November to a fourth six-year term, Mr. Church has established a reputation among most colleagues as a liberal "pragmatist" who is uncommonly articulate. His few Senate detractors prefer, privately, to describe him as "a bit pretentious" and overly willing to compromise in order to pass legislation bearing his name.

Studied New Deal

Frank Forrester Church was born July 25, 1924, in Boise. His parents owned a sporting goods store and, like most people in southern Idaho, were conservative Republicans given to frequent tirades against the New Deal. As a youth, Mr. Church used to visit the Boise library to bone up on the Roosevelt Administration so that he could enliven dinner table conversation by arguing with his father.

At the same time, he was influenced by the liberal views of Chase A. Clark, a Democratic Governor of Idaho, a United States District Court judge and, most impor-

tantly, the father of Mr. Church's steady date in high school, Bethine Clark. They were married in 1947 and have two sons, Forrest, 26, and Chase, 17.

Mr. Church "likes the sound of words," his wife said. "If they don't sound good in his mouth he doesn't use them." The Senator's family used to tease him about talking to himself while shaving.

As a high school junior, Mr. Church won first prize, a \$4,000 college scholarship, in the American Legion's national oratory contest in 1941. His speech, titled, "The American Way of Life," may have struck a somewhat jingoistic chord, the Senator said, but in that wartime period, "I think we all were."

Arts and the Law

His studies at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., were interrupted by the war. After his stint as an intelligence officer, Mr. Church earned degrees from Stanford in the arts and law, then settled into an abbreviated law practice in Boise. He ran unsuccessfully for the Idaho Legislature in 1952 but four years later defeated the incumbent Republican Senator, Herman Welker.

Mr. Church entered the Senate in 1957 "very much in the mold of what was then the conventional wisdom," as he stated it. "I saw the world as half slave and half free and our role as standing on the watchtower, protecting the world from further encroachment by Communist forces."

But his liberal attitude on domestic issues and his assignment to the Foreign Relations Committee in 1958 drew Mr. Church into the orbit of international liberals such as former Senators J. W. Fulbright, Democrat of Arkansas, and John Sherman Cooper, Republican of Kentucky.

Senator Church first drew wide public notice when he delivered a ringing keynote address at the Democratic National Convention in 1960.

By 1967, Mr. Church's foreign policy view was well fixed—he had spoken against United States military aid to South Vietnam and later, with Senator Cooper, would enact legislation restricting American involvement in Indochina—and right-wing groups in Idaho made an abortive attempt to recall him from the Senate.

To Eschew Campaigning

Mr. Church has been mentioned from time to time as a potential Democratic nominee for national office, but he said on Monday that he would eschew any involvement in the 1976 campaign so long as the intelligence investigation was in progress.

"There is no, and should be no political mileage in such an investigation," Mr. Church declared. "People probably have their minds on economic matters and many may even resent a full-fledged investigation into the intelligence activities of the Federal Government."

All the same, Mr. Church did not appear to be unhappy with the sudden prominence his assignment has thrust on him, a prominence not associated with an Idaho politician since the death of Senator Borah.

Posing for photographs in his office, the Senator turned obligingly to offer a comparison of his profile with that of the Borah portrait when Mrs. Church asked a photographer to "get both of their chins jutting out."

Conviction Overtaken

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 29 (AP)—The conspiracy conviction of Lewis Kates, former Philadelphia Deputy City Solicitor was overturned yesterday by the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. Mr. Kates was found guilty last April of taking part in a \$1.8-million plan to inflate the costs to the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority of commercial moving.