

# NYTimes Senator Says Inquiry Found 'Gaps' in C.I.A.'s Records

MAY 17 1975

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 16—The chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence said today his committee's investigation had discovered "gaps" in Central Intelligence Agency records on covert operations, raising the question of whether the records had been lost or destroyed.

In a breakfast meeting with reporters, Senator Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho, said that he could not amplify on what specific areas of the records contained gaps, but he said they concerned covert operations.

He answered a question in which newsmen noted that Richard M. Helms, former Director of Central Intelligence, had ordered telephone taps of his personal calls destroyed shortly before he left the agency.

Mr. Helms's action came under criticism during the Watergate case, because Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana, the Senate majority leader, had ordered the agency not to destroy any records.

### Staff Studies Records

Senator Church's comment came after several weeks in which the intelligence committee staff was obtaining records from the C.I.A. and scanning others at the agency. He has said he could not tell whether there was any malicious destruction of records.

Mr. Church, who is also a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said the agency had been following a new law that requires it to report covert operations to Congress and has been reporting operations since 1973. "I would not say they are major operations," he added.

Senator Church said that his

committee's investigation had been somewhat delayed from its original schedule. He said the committee hoped to begin public hearings in July and to conduct these hearings, which would deal with domestic intelligence operations, into September. Originally, the committee had hoped to begin hearings next month.

### 'Manhunt' Ruled Out

According to Mr. Church, the committee is trying to avoid the image that it is out to dismantle the intelligence system. He said the investigation was "not intended to be a manhunt; its purpose is not to trace down or prepare criminal action against any people involved with the C.I.A. or other operations."

The question of missing C.I.A. materials has been a nagging one to the men conducting the Congressional investigations of the agency.

"There is no way that we really can prevent destruction of embarrassing records," one Capitol Hill source has said. "It would mean that we would have to rely upon the memories of witnesses, and these are sometimes not as clear as they should be."

During the Watergate investigation, it was revealed in public testimony that Mr. Helms had ordered tapes of conversations over his personal telephone destroyed. The tapes covered a period of several years and included conversations between Mr. Helms, President Nixon and top White House officials.

### Some Records Not Kept

Earlier, C.I.A. sources told a reporter that, in addition to missing records, there were instances in the domestic intelligence operations where records were never kept. These sources said that, in the super-

secret counter-intelligence field, some actions had never been committed to paper.

In another development, United Press International quoted Senator George McGovern, Democrat of South Dakota, as saying that Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba had offered to provide documentary evidence to prove that the C.I.A. had been involved in plots to assassinate him.

Senator McGovern, who recently visited Cuba, said the Cuban Premier was "convinced

that the C.I.A. was at least indirectly involved in several attempts on his life." The Senator added that Premier Castro said "there have been about 100 such attempts, some involving direct assaults on him, some involving attacks or attempted assassinations on high-ranking officials."

Mr. McGovern said that the Premier had said he was prepared to show documentation of C.I.A. involvement in some of the attempts.