

Church CIA Panel Split by Dissent

By Jack Anderson
and Les Whitten

The select Senate committee investigating the Central Intelligence Agency and the FBI has imposed airtight security on its operations. We have learned that the committee has been riven by dissent, has hired few real investigators and has scarcely scratched the surface of the CIA and FBI scandals.

A senior committee worker who will be fired if he is caught, has composed an explicit memo for us on the committee's problems.

Chairman Frank Church (D-Idaho) "is under a delusion he will be able to conclude the probe within the next few months," the handwritten memo reports. "He lacks investigative staff to do it and has no way of knowing if the preliminary information given is either accurate or complete.

"If it is not, it means the committee will have to start from scratch again, with competent investigators to find out what the true facts are."

The memo complains that the committee has ignored the military and anti-drug agencies it is supposed to investigate. "The main preliminary work done so far has been in reference to the FBI and CIA with virtually nothing else being done concerning the rest of the committee mandate," the memo reports.

At "virtually every step of the

almost nonexistent investigation, Church has bent over backward to please the CIA," it concludes.

Church is one of the most able, conscientious senators. But we have confirmed that some of his committee colleagues have complained to their staffs that Church, in his zeal to be fair-minded, has sided most often with the views of Sens. Barry M. Goldwater (R-Ariz.) and John G. Tower (R-Tex.)

Goldwater and Tower have taken a stern stand against senators — including Howard H. Baker Jr. (R-Tenn), Gary Hart (D-Colo), Phil Hart (D-Mich.), Walter F. Mondale (D-Minn.), and Richard S. Schweiker (R-Pa.)—who favor an as-open-as-possible investigation.

Some committee sources have insisted that sweetness, light and unanimity have prevailed in the secret sessions. This ambience apparently can be attributed to traditional Senate civility.

At one closed meeting, for example, Sen. Robert B. Morgan (D-N.C.) urged that details of CIA assassination plots be kept from the American public, our sources report. Another source said Morgan, after speaking about assassinations, left it up in the air whether facts should be suppressed.

There have been complaints that Church and Tower, the

committee's vice chairman, confer secretly with the CIA on a wide range of subjects but don't fully share their information with other senators.

Finally, Gary Hart and Schweiker visited CIA headquarters recently, meeting with Deputy Director Carl Duckett, whose staff gave them a briefing.

Nervous CIA officials spread the word that the visit had to do with reports that Duckett was going to be named CIA director. Actually, Duckett stayed with the senators a few moments.

The Church committee, meanwhile, has had trouble recruiting crack investigators. A recent bid was made to hire Washington's prime private eye, Richard Bast, who has been battling the FBI for 15 years.

Committee aide Patrick Shea secretly contacted the detective, explaining: "We need some top-flight investigators."

Shea, who said he was speaking for staff director William Miller, invited Bast to hire "a couple other people that you trust . . . who would be supervised by you."

Describing the work, Shea said: "There are four task forces right now—domestic intelligence, military (intelligence), technological intelligence, and then 'command and control,' which focuses largely on the White House."

Shea stressed that "it's not go-

ing to be a witch hunt. We're trying to information and material which show good law enforcement and good intelligence operations were conducted. It goes both ways."

Bast made a follow-up visit to the committee's heavily guarded office, where he found a Capitol police officer logging every visitor. The police, Bast noted, aren't above suspicion as informants for the intelligence community. "You don't get heavy informers coming to see you with a setup like that," Bast said.

He learned that the committee had been working for two months on staff credentials. "That's something that could be done in two days," he said.

"I decided they mostly were a bunch of pussycats and some were interested in a cover-up. I don't want my name linked to that kind of investigation."

Footnote: Church declined comment, but a spokesman defended the committee as "moving along on course." He said the charge that the probe is limited to the FBI and the CIA is "utterly wrong," and that more investigators will be brought in when needed. At present, he said, the need is for skilled lawyers to question witnesses who have been identified. There is some dissent in every group, he said, but "so far we've avoided splits. We've been able to show unanimity."