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C.I.A. DEATH PLOTS

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But Church Would Not Say Whether Any Murders Were Attempted NYTimes

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WASHINGTON, June 4—Senator Frank Church, the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Investigating Committee, said today that he had heard "hard evidence" implicating the Central Intelligence Agency in more than one scheme to assassinate a foreign political leader, and he cautioned against drawing the conclusion, based on recent public statements by Vice President Rockefeller and others, that all of the agency's transgressions had been minor.

Mr. Church said that he was not yet certain whether such schemes had been worked out at the direction of higher officials of previous administrations.

But he declared, "I don't care who may have ordered it, murder is murder. The United States is not a wicked country and we cannot abide a wicked government."

At a breakfast meeting with reporters, the Idaho Democrat declined to give any details of the testimony heard by his committee in recent weeks, or to say whether the allegations went beyond news reports of three C.I.A.-sponsored attempts on the life of Cuban Premier Fidel Castro.

Mr. Church did say, however, that more than one such "plot" was involved.

He gave assurances that an "appropriate disclosure" of

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the details would be made to the American people when "we have all of the evidence," including "corroborating testimony, from other witnesses who may have personal knowledge of these matters."

Mr. Church sharply criticized some members of the Presidential commission that has spent nearly five months looking into allegations of C.I.A. wrongdoing for having dismissed the panel's findings of transgressions by the agency as of no major importance.

"I don't regard murder plots as a minor matter," Mr. Church said today, "and the C.I.A. has been implicated in this kind of activity."

He added that both his committee "and the Rockefeller commission itself" had heard "enough of this evidence to substantiate my statement."

The Senator expressed "concern" over what he described as "the apparent attempt of certain members to lead the public to believe that any misdeeds of the C.I.A. were minor and that the agency has been relatively without guilt."

Although he did not name names, Mr. Church clearly was

referring to statements by Vice President Rockefeller, who heads the panel, C. Douglas Dillon, the former Treasury Secretary, and others that served to minimize the extent of the C.I.A.'s wrongdoing.

Mr. Rockefeller said on Monday that while the agency had committed some acts that were "in contradiction to the statutes," they were not of "major" proportions in the context of the agency's over-all operations.

The Rockefeller commission's investigation, which is now virtually complete, will be summarized in a report that is expected to be made public this weekend.

Mr. Church said that William E. Colby, the Director of Central Intelligence, had testified at today's executive session of the committee on the assassination matter, and that he expected Mr. Colby to return "again and again" before that phase of the inquiry was finished.

He added that among other witnesses the panel planned to hear on that topic were Robert A. Maheu, a former top aide to Howard Hughes, the billionaire, and John Rosselli, a reputed organized crime figure.

Mr. Rosselli and Mr. Maheu, both of whom have been subpoenaed by the Church committee, have been linked in published accounts to one or more C.I.A.-inspired plots against the life of Mr. Castro in the early nineteen-sixties.

Mr. Church added that he and the committee would also

"consider" calling former senior officials of the defunct South Vietnamese Government who may have been involved with Operation Phoenix, the C.I.A.'s counter-terror program in Vietnam in the late nineteen-sixties.

Asked whether he felt that Mr. Colby and other former

C.I.A. officials had been open and candid with his committee on the assassination matter, Mr. Church replied that he had "no reason to believe now that facts are being withheld from the committee."

He added, however, that it was "possible that we could misjudge the case."



The New York Times/Mike Lien
William E. Colby, right, C.I.A. chief, appearing yesterday before the Senate select committee headed by Frank Church, left, of Idaho. Right from Mr. Church are Daniel K. Inouye of Hawaii and Howard H. Baker Jr. of Tennessee.