

## Senate Probe

'No Evidence of CIA  
Link to Butterfield'

Washington

Senator Frank Church (Dem-Ida.) said yesterday that his Senate committee has found no evidence to support charges that Alexander P. Butterfield, a former aide in the Nixon White House, secretly worked for the Central Intelligence Agency.

"Because of my effort to conduct an even-handed investigation . . . it is also necessary for me to speak up for the CIA when I think they've been handed a bum rap," said Church, who is chairman of the special Senate committee probing federal intelligence activities.

"There is simply no scintilla of evidence that would substantiate such a charge."

Referring to retired Air Force Colonel L. Fletcher Prouty, who made the charge, Church said:

"I think that on close interrogation Mr. Prouty is unable to substantiate his earlier statement and acknowledges this to be the case."

Prouty, author of a book on the CIA, and CIA Director William E. Colby have been questioned by the committee on the Butterfield matter, Church said. Prouty first presented his charges last week to a special House committee that is far behind the Church panel on its investigation of the CIA.

Butterfield has publicly denied that he ever worked for or handled any assignments for the CIA. He figured in Senate Watergate hearings two years ago when he revealed the existence of a secret taping system in the Nixon White House.

Church also said his committee's nearly concluded investigation into alleged foreign assassination plots has found no direct involvement of former Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy or former Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.

Church said his panel has "no hard evidence directly linking these assassination plots and plans in which the CIA has engaged with any

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former president or former attorney general."

"We have to face the possibility, the very real possibility, that the agency (the CIA) may have been behaving like a rogue elephant on a rampage" and acted "without the knowledge of former presidents," Church told reporters.

The committee, which last March began investigating charges that the CIA had plotted to kill foreign leaders, is expected to wind up closed-door testimony next Tuesday or Wednesday.

Church implied that the committee's report will be unclear in some areas, and that conflicts exist in the secret testimony heard by the panel.

"Testimony of a kind that would reach a former president has been based upon assumption, opinion and conjecture," Church said.

"I would never be a party to a finding of guilt or an attribution of guilt where good men are concerned that isn't based upon clear and convincing evidence."

Church's comments in support of the late Kennedy brothers differed from those of Vice President Nelson Rockefeller last month on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Rockefeller said then, "Many of the people have died who were allegedly involved (in assassination plans) and others were assassinated in this country—tragic thing."

He emphasized that the presidential commission he headed on the CIA had reached no firm conclusions on the assassination issue. But he added:

"I think it's fair to say that no major undertakings by the CIA were done without either the knowledge and/or approval of the White House."

The Senate committee principally has been studying alleged attempts on the life of Cuban Premier Fidel Castro which reportedly began in 1960—in the waning months of the Eisenhower administration—and continued until 1963.

But the panel also has sought documents and witnesses in probing a possible CIA role in the deaths of Patrice Lumumba of the Congo (now Zaire) in February, 1961, Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo in May, 1961, and South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem in November, 1963.

John S. Eisenhower, son of the late President and a former U.S. ambassador to Belgium, volunteered testimony to the Church committee yesterday that President Eisenhower could not have authorized assassination plans.

Meeting reporters afterward, Eisenhower said of his testimony:

"My piece was simply that I was so close to President Eisenhower that I don't see how he could have done anything without my knowing it. And I know nothing."

Eisenhower said, "Except for one very short period of ten minutes that we can find, my father was never alone with the director of the CIA without General (Andrew J.) Goodpaster or me being there. And nothing, repeat nothing, of this type ever came up."

Asked about the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs invasion aimed at overthrowing Castro in April, 1961, Eisenhower said his father had authorized preparations for it. But he added:

"He obviously never did give the word to go because that happened three months after he was out of office."

Los Angeles Times

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