

Sen. Church May Fight Ford's Choice of Bush

Washington

Senator Frank Church (Dem-Ida.) said yesterday he might lead a Senate fight against confirmation of George Bush as new CIA director. He also said there was a remote chance President Ford would withdraw Bush's nomination.

The Idaho Democrat heads the Senate Intelligence Committee investigating the CIA.

"I think there could not be a poorer choice than to take a past chairman of the Republican party and put him in as director of an agency that's supposed to be non-partisan," Church said.

Asked on the CBS' "Face the Nation" if he would lead a Senate move to block the nomination, Church replied:

"I'm thinking of doing it. But I haven't decided whether it would be entirely fitting in my position to head up the opposition to him.

Meanwhile, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield said he will support the nominations of Bush and Donald Runsfeld, named by Mr. Ford to replace Defense Secretary James Schlesinger.

Church admitted Bush, now head of the U.S. diplomatic delegation in Peking, would probably be confirmed, but "I see a fight ahead."

He said, "It's difficult to believe he'd be rejected, but if sufficient questions are raised, I think it possible the President may withdraw the nomination."

Church said that, with an election year upcoming, the CIA

should be run by someone with no political ambitions who can "stand up to the President and fight for the facts as his agency sees them."

Bush also once was a Republican congressman from Texas.

Church was bitter over Mr. Ford's firing of CIA Director William Colby.

"I think he was the fall guy," Church said. "The wrong-doing we're exposing happened before he became director. He understands the need for an investigation.

"I don't know what the President had in mind firing him, but it produced such an effect the President had to call him and say 'Mr. Colby, stay on for a few weeks.'"

He said he had listened carefully to Mr. Ford's press conference but "got no hint" of why the President acted against Colby.

Church said he did not know if Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was behind the move, but added "Mr. Kissinger has not been happy with his investigation."

Asked if committee report might threaten Kissinger, he replied:

"I don't know if he's threatened. The facts about Mr. Kissinger's role and Ambassador Helms' role will come out when the committee makes its report in ten days or two weeks."

Richard Helms, now Ambassador to Iran, was formerly CIA director.

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