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Ford Limits Support for Spying Inquiry

By NICHOLAS M. HORROCK
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 5— President Ford gave the leaders of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence only a qualified pledge of support in their investigation of the United States intelligence apparatus, Senator Frank Church, the committee chairman, said today.

At the White House with the President and Senator John G. Tower, Republican of Texas, vice chairman of the committee, Mr. Church said in an abrupt news conference that he had declined to issue a written report of an "oral" section of the report dealing with as-

He also sought from the President a report on the Central Intelligence Agency's domestic activities prepared by William E. Colby, Director of Central Intelligence, and turned over to Mr. Ford earlier this year. And the Senator asked for Mr. Ford's assistance in working out an arrangement to obtain the evidence and testimony being gathered by a White House commission on the C.I.A. headed by Vice President Rockefeller.

Mr. Church said the President had declined to issue a written report of an "oral" section of the report dealing with assassinations. The President responded, Senator Church said, that he would discuss the matter with committee leaders at an "appropriate" time. Press and television reports, beginning last Friday, have said that Mr. Colby told President Ford of several assassination plots against foreign heads of state which, if made public, would embarrass the United States and hamper foreign policy.

These reports indicated that it was the President's concern over the disclosure of these matters, that in part, influenced his choice of men to sit on the Rockefeller commission investigating C.I.A. domestic activities.

No Commitment

Mr. Church said he had told the President that the Senate committee wanted to avoid court battles in its effort to obtain evidence from the executive branch. But he said that the President had not ruled out the possibility that he might invoke his executive privilege and withhold some data or witnesses.

The controversial doctrine of executive privilege holds that the President can withhold certain executive-branch data from Congressional investigating committees.

The President put no barrier in the way of the committee's working out an arrangement to exchange evidence with the Rockefeller commission, but he made no commitment on it, Mr. Church said.

Mr. Church said that the President seemed satisfied with his report on the methods the committee was following to provide security for the do-

ument and evidence it was provided.

Later, Ron Nessen, the White House press secretary, said that "a constructive and worthwhile meeting."

A meeting of the Senate committee scheduled for today was postponed indefinitely.

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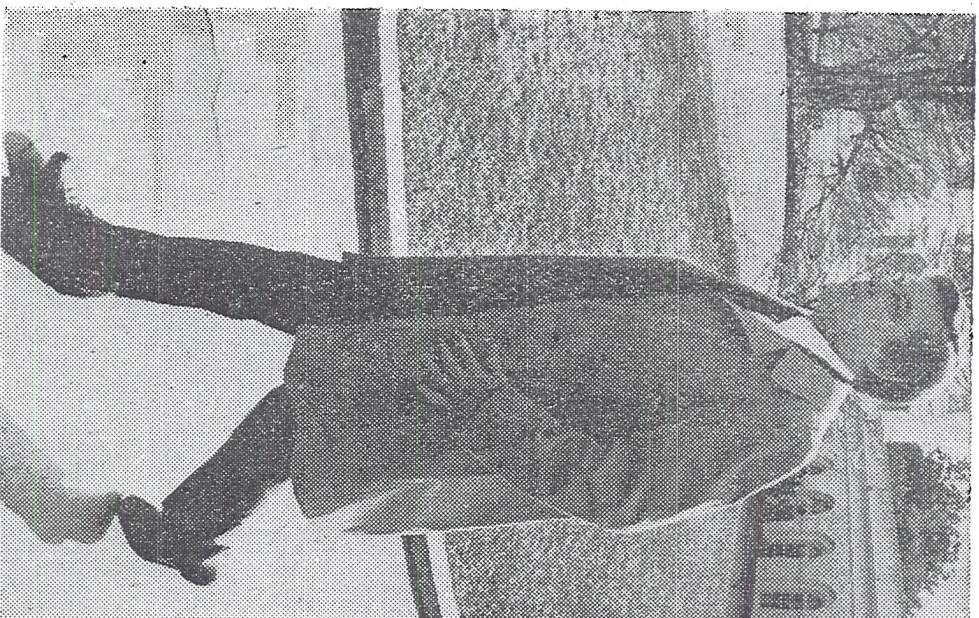
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The New York Times/Mike Linn
Frank Church, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, leaving the White House yesterday after asking President Ford for help in the committee's investigation of the U.S. intelligence apparatus.

that the President had had and that Mr. Ford had felt it was "a constructive and worthwhile meeting." A meeting of the Senate committee scheduled for today was postponed indefinitely.