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Senate Panel Probes CIA Role in Chile

The Senate intelligence operations committee yesterday began its investigation of the Central Intelligence Agency's covert operations abroad with a briefing from CIA Director William E. Colby on its past activities in Chile.

Colby will appear again before the committee in executive session today for questioning about the 1970 assassination of Gen. Rene Schneider, who was commander of the Chilean army.

The Washington Post, quoting informed sources, reported last week that the CIA had encouraged a 1970 scheme to touch off a coup in Chile that

went awry and resulted in Schneider's death.

Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho) said CIA operations in Chile directed against the late president Salvador Allende constituted the first of "half a dozen representative cases" that Senate investigators intend to explore in depth.

He said yesterday's hearing was held at the insistence of the White House, which has set such briefings as a condition for the committee's taking up "any given subject in the covert action field."

According to disclosures stemming from secret Colby testimony to a House Armed Services subcommittee last year, the CIA spent \$3 million to foil Allende's candidacy in 1964 and \$8 million attempting to block his election and undermine his government after 1969.

Schneider was fatally wounded on Oct. 22, 1970—two days before the Chilean Congress ratified Allende's election as president.

A gang of assailants, apparently in hopes of provoking a military coup, sought to kidnap Schneider as he was being driven to his office in Santiago, but shot him when it appeared he was trying to draw a gun.

A Marxist, Allende himself was overthrown in September, 1973, in a bloody coup that resulted in his death.

Church said he expected the briefing to clear the way for a series of committee requests for various documents and interviews with witnesses on CIA operations in Chile. The senator said Colby, who defended the agency's activities in Chile, told the committee he "anticipated no trouble" in satisfying those requests.

The committee, meanwhile, hopes to finish its questioning of witnesses this week concerning CIA involvement in foreign assassination schemes against Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, the late Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo and others.

Church said the committee will take testimony on Wednesday from Richard Goodwin, a former White House aide under President Kennedy. Former CIA Director Richard Helms, now U.S. ambassador to Iran, and Richard Bissell, once head of the CIA's clandestine operations division, will be recalled for "additional questioning" later in the week.

The Senate committee still hopes to issue a report on the assassination issue at the end of the month, but Church told reporters he would recommend that the committee continue working during the congressional recess in August if the deadline cannot be met.

Attorney General Edward H. Levi and FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley will meet with the committee Wednesday in connection with its inquiry into alleged FBI improprieties and violations of law.