

White House Defied

Senate Will Open Spy Probe

Washington

The Senate intelligence committee will hold public hearings on the National Security Agency today despite White House pressure to keep this and other sensitive topics under wraps, Senator Frank Church (Dem-Idaho), said yesterday.

Expressing impatience with the White House attitude, Church, the committee chairman, said the administration opposes publication of a panel report on foreign assassination plots and has asked that hearings on the super secret NSA and Central Intelligence Agency operations in Chile be held in private.

"I must say that pressures are mounting on a broadening front" to keep the committee's

work as secret as possible, Church told reporters after a closed morning session with CIA Director William E. Colby.

Defying Mr. Ford's personal request, Church said the panel will hold an open hearing today on electronic surveillance operations of the National Security Agency — the most secretive of all U.S. intelligence units.

The hearings "will take place in spite of continuing pressures against them," Church said, with the agency director, Air Force Lieutenant General Lew Allen, as a witness.

The committee meant to begin the NSA hearings earlier, but Mr. Ford asked that they be

delayed in the interest of national security. The NSA monitors communications worldwide for U.S. intelligence and has been accused of eavesdropping illegally on American citizens.

Church said Colby, called to testify at hearings on U.S. covert intelligence activities in Chile, had asked on behalf of the administration that the panel keep the Chile hearings closed.

Church said no decision has been made, but clearly indicated he considers the request unreasonable.

"It is widely known that there was a considerable involvement of the United States in Chile," he said. "It's past history."

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