

SENATOR CHURCH REJECTS SECRECY

Accuses Ford of Trying to Obstruct Investigation of Intelligence Agencies

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4—Senator Frank Church, accusing the Administration of attempting to obstruct a Senate committee's investigation of Federal intelligence agencies, formally rejected today a request by President Ford that the panel keep secret its findings of involvement by the Central Intelligence Agency in attempts to assassinate foreign heads of state.

The President made his plea in a letter delivered to Mr. Church last week, which asserted that publication of the com-

Text of President's letter to Church is on Page 18.

mittee's findings would "do grievous damage" to the nation's reputation and foreign policy initiatives. The White House made the letter public today.

In a three-page letter delivered to Mr. Ford and subsequently made public today by Senator Church, the Idaho Democrat noted that the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence had undertaken its investigation of alleged C.I.A. assassination plots at the "urgings" of the President himself, after a limited inquiry into the matter by a Presidential commission last June.

Mr. Church, who is chairman of the Senate select committee, said in the letter that his com-

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mittee's intention to issue a public report on its findings had "long been clear." He also said that he believed the national interest would be "better served by letting the American people know the true and complete story" behind the alleged assassination plots.

Panel Vote Noted

The letter to Mr. Ford noted that the Senate committee had voted yesterday to approve a final draft of the 500-page report, to submit the document to the full Senate and, if the Senate did not object, to make it public.

Ron Nessen, the White House press secretary, told reporters

today that the President told him he did not want to keep from the American public information about the activities of its citizens, but rather, he wanted to keep details about the attempted assassinations from those "who don't have the best interests of the United States at heart."

Mr. Nessen added that the President intended to send to every Senator a similar special appeal to preserve the report's confidentiality.

But Senator Church told a news conference later that he did not believe sufficient votes could be mustered in the Senate to support a resolution blocking disclosure of the report, if such a resolution was introduced.

The President's effort to keep the assassination report secret, Mr. Church said, was but one element in what the Senator termed "a pattern" of attempts by the Ford Administration to

impede his committee's nearly concluded investigation.

Senator Church recalled the reluctance of the White House over the last few weeks to agree to the holding of public hearings by the Senate committee on the operation of the National Security Agency, and he added that the President's dismissal two days ago of William E. Colby as Director of Central Intelligence represented a further "impediment" to the panel's inquiry.

He was "surprised," Senator Church said, "that the President chose this moment to dismiss Mr. Colby." Such a move could "only have a disruptive effect" on the committee's working relationship with the C.I.A. and thus on the progress of the investigation itself, Mr. Church added.

But he said he was "determined to press forward and complete the work" by the end of next month, the deadline the committee has set for the con-

clusion of the investigative phase of its activities.

Senator Church said he "certainly would not" be responsive to any suggestions from the White House or elsewhere that the panel suspend its inquiry until George Bush, Mr. Colby's designated successor, had been confirmed by the Senate. But there has been no indication thus far that such suggestions might be forthcoming.

The Senator also said he would not be reluctant in the meantime to call Mr. Colby as a committee witness "wherever his testimony would be relevant."

Asked about testimony by Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger last week before a House committee that all covert intelligence operations undertaken by the United States since 1969 had been personally approved by President Nixon and President Ford, Mr. Church said

his investigation had found nothing to dispute that.

But he added that the assassination report would "make clear" that Secretary Kissinger's assertions were not universally true with respect to some previous Administrations, which he would not further identify.

It is known that the report takes into account activities that occurred during the Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, as well as that of Mr. Nixon.

Infiltration Dismissed

Senator Church also made public today his written response to 50 members of Congress who had inquired of him last month about reports that agents of the Soviet secret police had infiltrated the staffs of seven unnamed Senators.

He said in the letter that William G. Miller, staff director of the select committee, had been

told by the Federal Bureau of Investigation that it had no evidence of such infiltration and that he hoped "the allegations about infiltration can be put to rest."

In a related development, the House intelligence committee voted, 8 to 5, to abandon its insistence that Mr. Kissinger provide the panel with the names of junior and middle-level State Department officers who had made particular recommendations for or criticisms of policies adopted by their superiors during various international crisis.

The House panel had subpoenaed such document from Secretary Kissinger, a criticism of the State Department's handling and assessment of intelligence reports during the crisis provoked by the coup last year in Cyprus and the subsequent invasion of that country by Turkish forces.