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SENATORS ORDER INQUIRY ON CHILE

Foreign Relations Panel
Asks Study of Testimony
Called Misleading

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 17—

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, amid Congressional protests over President Ford's defense of clandestine intelligence operations, today authorized its staff to study available evidence that official testimony had been misleading about the Central Intelligence Agency's involvement in Chile.

Committee sources later cautioned that the Senators' decision, announced by Chairman J. W. Fulbright, Democrat of Arkansas, called only for a preliminary "pulling together" of testimony and not yet a full-fledged investigation into the foreign policy of the Nixon Administration.

"This is a very old problem," Senator Fulbright told reporters after the long closed-door committee meeting this morning. "The involvement of the C.I.A. in other countries has been well-known for years. There's not much news in that."

"In my view," he added, "it's very questionable practice to go beyond the collection of intelligence. I personally have always thought they should be confined to intelligence gathering."

'Outrage' Over Reports

Some Senators later suggested that the committee's reluctance to proceed more directly stemmed from what was depicted as "outrage" over the publication today in The New York Times and The Washington Post of the gist of a private subcommittee staff report recommending possible perjury and contempt-of-Congress charges against five government officials as failing to testify fully about the C.I.A. role in Chile.

The staff report, prepared by Jerome I. Levinson, chief counsel of the Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations, was rejected today.

"The commotion over the leaks almost wiped the whole thing off but they are going ahead," one source who attended the committee meeting said later.

The disagreement inside the committee over how to proceed

with the inquiry was made clear by Senator Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho and chairman of the Subcommittee on the Multinational Corporations, which heard the apparently misleading testimony during hearings into the International Telephone & Telegraph Corporation's involvement in Chile in early 1973. "Our policy in Chile was unsavory and unprincipled," Mr. Church told reporters today. "It can't possibly be justified unless we take the view that our methods and objectives are the same as those in the Soviet Union." "The Chilean affair warrants a full investigation by the Senate," Senator Church added.

Fulbright Noncommittal

Mr. Fulbright was noncommittal, however, when asked whether he expected the staff investigation to lead to a revision of the Nixon Administration's foreign policies as well as the involvement of Secretary of State Kissinger in the Chilean decision-making. In his staff report, Mr. Levinson recommended that the Senate committee reopen its confirmation hearings on Mr. Kissinger, saying he "deceived" the committee about Chile. "We'll have to wait for the report," Mr. Fulbright said. "I don't know whether we should have further hearings or not." Mr. Fulbright, who reportedly has been offered the ambassadorship to Britain after he leaves the Senate, depicted the publication of the Levinson report as "regrettable" and added that "the staff has no business putting out a pseudo-randa of that sort."

A similar view was expressed by Senator Claiborne Pell, Democrat of Rhode Island, as he left the closed hearing. Asked whether there was committee concern over the C.I.A. involvement in Chile, Mr. Pell said that "the concern was more that statements should be made by Senators, and not by staff."

Committee sources said that the staff of the Foreign Relations Committee, directed by Pat M. Holt, was requested to complete its preliminary review of the evidence by next week. These persons said that the new study would incorporate some of the findings of the Levinson report.

Mr. Levinson, in his memorandum, called for possible perjury and contempt of Congress proceedings against Richard Helms, former director of Central Intelligence, William V. Broe, a former C.I.A. official, Charles A. Kory, who was Ambassador to Chile from 1967 to 1971.