

# Nixon Tied to CIA Effort

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Former President Richard M. Nixon authorized the Central Intelligence Agency to make a last ditch, all-out effort in September 1970, to keep Salvador Allende from becoming president of Chile, authoritative government sources say.

As a result of this assignment, the sources said, the CIA became involved in the planning of two military coups d'etat, both of which included a proposal to kidnap Gen. Rene Schneider, chief of staff of the Chilean army.

Theoretically, the kidnaping of Schneider would have given the Chilean military a justification for declaring martial law and assuming the powers of government.

The sources said that the CIA tried later to stop the carrying out of one plan, but that it went forward nevertheless and Schneider was killed by Chilean military plotters in the kidnap attempt.

**IN THE OTHER** plot, the agency was said to have supplied insurgents with three machine guns and with tear gas grenades. When it became clear that the plot could not get broad political support it was halted and the guns were later returned to the CIA unused, the sources said.

Henry A. Kissinger, then Nixon's assistant for national security affairs, was briefed about the first plot on Oct. 13, 1970, by Thomas J. Karamessines, the chief of covert operations for the intelligence agency, the sources said. Karamessines reportedly told Kissinger the plot had little chance of success and it was at that point the two agreed it should be halted.

Kissinger has told President Ford of this plot, administration sources said, but has said he did not know that the CIA was negotiating with yet another group. Intelligence sources said, however, that agency

officials felt Nixon's orders to block Allende, which were strongly worded, constituted a blanket authorization for their activities.

**PREVIOUS ACCOUNTS** of CIA involvement in efforts to stop Allende from assuming the presidency, appeared to be limited to the secret financing of opposition parties and labor unions. The latest disclosures are the first confirmation that Nixon and the CIA contemplated military coups or the violent takeover of the Chilean government.

This new information, with copies of congressional testimony in 1973 by Richard M. Helms, then CIA director, have been forwarded to the Department of Justice for study on whether the contradictions may constitute perjury, the sources confirmed.

Helms testified on Chile before a Senate committee

as early as May 1973, and later in connection with his confirmation as U.S. Ambassador to Iran. He also testified at a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Chile earlier this year. There are contradictions in his testimony over the depth and extent of CIA activities against Allende.

**GOVERNMENT** sources and sources within the intelligence community gave this report on the fast-paced events of the fall of 1970:

On Sept. 15, 1970, 11 days after Allende, a Marxist, had won the presidential elections by a plurality, Nixon called a secret meeting at the White House. It was attended by Kissinger, Helms and John Mitchell, then attorney general.

The meeting was unusual because it was out of the

## in Chile

normal channels of transmitting instructions to the CIA under the law and, in practice, CIA covert operations are passed on by the 40 committee, a top level White House security group, and transmitted through the National Security Council. It is unclear whether the matter ever reached the agenda of the committee.

Nixon was, one source said, "extremely anxious" about Allende's rise to power in Chile. Another source said the former President was "frantic." He told Helms in "strong language" that the CIA was not doing enough in the situation and it had better "come up with some ideas." He said that money was no object and authorized an initial expenditure of \$10 million to unseat the Chilean Marxist.

**NOTES ON THE** meeting, however, do not indicate that Nixon ever specifically ordered the CIA to arrange a coup d'etat in Chile. But the "tone" of the meeting, one source said, was "do everything you can."

The agency redoubled its efforts. Karamessines, deputy director for plans at the CIA and thus the chief covert operator, went to Chile himself, one source said.

On Oct. 13, 1970, Karamessines briefed Kissinger on the CIA's progress. He told Kissinger that Brig. Gen. Roberto Viaux, who had recently retired from the Chilean army, was plotting to kidnap Schneider as the prelude to a military takeover. Karamessines said, how-

ever, that it was the opinion of the CIA that Viaux's project could not succeed. Kissinger told the CIA to "keep the pressure up" and keep the CIA's "assets" in Chile up to par, but agreed that this plan should not go forward.

He told the agency to try to halt Viaux's plot. These sources said that CIA cable traffic, copies of which are

in the hands of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, indicate that the CIA did make an effort to halt the plan.

**NEVERTHELESS,**

Viaux's plot went forward. On Oct. 22, 48 hours before the Chilean congress was scheduled to vote on Allende's election — the fact that he had not won a majority threw the decision into congress — an attempt was made to kidnap Schneider. When it appeared the general was going to resist, these sources said, he was killed by three .45 caliber bullets, according to Chilean press accounts.

However, between the Oct. 13 meeting and the killing of Schneider on Oct. 22, these sources said, the CIA was negotiating with a separate group of plotters. A group of military officers under Gen. Camilo Valen-

zuela, then commander of the Santiago army garrison, was also planning to kidnap Schneider to pave the way for a military takeover.

The CIA, these sources said, at first had greater confidence in Valenzuela's plot. Accordingly, officials at the agency headquarters authorized the CIA station in Santiago to give the insurgents three machine guns and tear gas grenades for use in a kidnaping attempt. The authorization was issued on Sunday, Oct. 24

**BUT WITHIN HOURS**

the CIA had ascertained that the Valenzuela coup would not get sufficient political support to succeed and that Jorge Alessandri Rodriguez of the right-wing National party, the runner-up in the election, would not

accept the presidency. Nevertheless, apparently on the order of CIA officials in Santiago, the guns and tear gas were reportedly given to the conspirators. They were later returned to the agency unused.

After Allende had been confirmed and had assumed office, the agency secretly sent money to the families of men arrested in Viaux's abortive plot, the sources said. The money, one source said, was paid to "keep the families quiet about the contacts with CIA."

According to the sources, Kissinger told Ford, after Nixon had resigned, of the stepped-up effort to unseat Allende and about the Viaux plot. But Kissinger has maintained, in private conversations, that he never knew about the second plot, the sources said.