

Ex-Envoy Relates '71 Vow on Chile

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Former Ambassador Orlando Letelier charged last week that Henry A. Kissinger took the initiative to assure him personally in late 1971 of nonintervention by the Central Intelligence Agency in Chile, although the public record now clearly indicates involvement by the agency.

Letelier, ambassador here for the government of President Salvador Allende, was imprisoned for a year by the military junta that seized power in September, 1973. He is now a lecturer at American University.

Kissinger's initiative in December, 1971, followed allegations of a CIA role in the first major anti-Allende demonstration in Santiago, the women's march of the empty pots.

"Kissinger asked me to assure President Allende that there was not a single person involved either directly or indirectly," Letelier said.

Letelier first made the allegation in a television interview, saying the assurance of nonintervention was made by a high official. Asked to confirm that the official was Kissinger, Letelier did so.

The meeting took place following a dinner at the home of columnist Joseph Alsop. Lete-

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lier said he was told Kissinger would come with a special message for him. "He drew me aside to say that there were no CIA people involved in any internal Chilean problem," said the former ambassador.

A spokesman for the State Department said Kissinger "had no recollection of any conversation" such as Letelier describes, and does not recall meeting him at the Alsop residence.

Alsop does remember the dinner but he said he did not remember Kissinger coming.

When the 1971 women's protest against food shortages took place, pro-Allende newspapers in Chile and elsewhere noted the similarity of the demonstration to those by women in Brazil, allegedly with CIA backing, prior to the 1964 coup ousting a left-wing government in that country.

Letelier said he believed Kissinger's assurances, passed them to Allende and used them as a basis for counseling restraint in later instances when his government suspected U.S. involvement in Chilean affairs.

Kissinger at that time was the presidential adviser on national security affairs. In other encounters, Kissinger indicated personal respect for Allende and said he was considering a visit to Chile, according to Letelier.

However, according to Rep. Michael J. Harrington (D-Mass.), CIA Director William E. Colby testified before a House subcommittee last April that the Forty Committee of the National Security Council authorized \$5 million for anti-Allende efforts following the election of the Marxist in late 1970.

The government has not specified what form that activity took, beyond a press conference statement by President Ford last September indicating that the money went to support opposition parties and newspapers.

State Department authorities privately contend the CIA efforts were aimed at keeping an oppressed opposition alive, not at bringing down the Allende government. They deny that any aid went to strikes or demonstrators such as the women.

Letelier said that in retrospect he sees evidence of a wide U.S. role, an "infernal



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machine" of outside intervention that he contends was decisive in Allende's fall.

Letelier also said he believes that the CIA was responsible for the May, 1972, break-in at the Chilean embassy. No arrests were ever made in the break-in, which came a month before the intruders were caught at the Watergate. He noted that Chile was then in critical negotiations with the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. on nationalization of its properties.

Two months earlier, columnist Jack Anderson had published documents revealing ITT efforts to engage the CIA in efforts to prevent Allende's ascension to the presidency.

Letelier said the only item of importance stolen from the embassy was his mailing list, but he said other rifled documents undoubtedly were photographed.

By mid-1973, Letelier indicated that Chile had further indications of CIA involvement. He cited statements by an American saying he was a former CIA agent who sought a Chilean passport in return for revelations of anti-Allende activities.

Letelier said that he could not recall the agent's name, but that Chile assisted him in reaching Sweden after taking his testimony in Santiago.

An American pilot later called the embassy offering to sell information on flight of arms to rightist Chilean guerrillas, Letelier said. The offer was turned down but the general data conformed with the government's own findings of alleged CIA activities, he added.

During that period the Forty Committee chaired by Kissinger authorized \$2.5 million more for Chile, some of it to influence an important election, according to the Harrington account of Colby's testimony.

Despite the evidence cited by Letelier, Chile made no formal accusation against the United States. Letelier left Washington to become foreign minister and then defense minister. By August, 1973, he said, the government had taken up a new round of talks aimed at settling differences with the United States.

Left-wing Socialists advised Allende against negotiating with a country they believed was seeking to overthrow his government, but Letelier said Allende went ahead, in part as a concession to the armed forces which sought conciliation.

The talks in August produced no public results and the coup came Sept. 11.