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Helms Concedes He Told Less Than He Knew

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Richard Helms, the former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, has testified that the Nixon Administration wanted President Allende of Chile overthrown, and that he himself had deliberately withheld information when he appeared before the Senate two years ago.

Mr. Helms' new testimony makes it all the more likely that Congress will try to bring out the whole Chilean story in its coming investigation of the C.I.A. and other United States intelligence agencies. It also underscores questions about earlier statements he and others have made in appearances before Congress to discuss the C.I.A.'s role in Chile.

The known record includes these statements and reports:

In February, 1973, testifying under oath before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee after his nomination as Ambassador to Iran, Mr. Helms denied reports that the C.I.A. had sought the overthrow of Dr. Allende, an elected Marxist. Mr. Helms also denied the C.I.A. had passed funds to Dr. Allende's opponents.

After Dr. Allende's overthrow and death in the military coup of September, 1973, Henry Kissinger, testifying before the same committee following his nomination as Secretary of State, said: "The C.I.A. had nothing to do with the coup." His statement, in the context of his testimony, referred solely to the military action.

Testifying under oath before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations, during hearings concluded in April, 1974:

Edward M. Korry said that while he was Ambassador to Chile for about a year after Dr. Allende's election in September, 1970, "we did not act in any manner that reflected a hard line."

Charles A. Meyer, who was Assistant Secretary of State for Latin-American Affairs at the time of the coup, said "we were religiously and scrupulously adhering to the policy of the Government of the United States . . . of nonintervention. We bought no votes, we funded no candidates, we promoted no coups."

On Sept. 8, 1974, New York Times reporter Seymour M. Hersh revealed that the new director of C.I.A., William E. Colby, had told Congress the Nixon Administration had authorized more than \$8-million for covert C.I.A. activities between 1970 and 1973 to make it impossible for the Allende Government to govern. Mr. Colby, testifying in secret before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Intelligence in April, 1974, maintained that all of the agency's operations against the Allende regime, including an unsuccessful attempt to bribe members of the Chilean Congress, had been approved in advance by the 40 Committee. That is a secret intelligence review panel in Washington headed by Mr. Kissinger.

Kissinger's Concession

On Sept. 19, 1974, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Mr. Kissinger conceded there had been clandestine C.I.A. activities in Chile. He said they had been aimed not at subverting the Allende Government but at providing financial support for opposition newspapers and parties threatened by the Marxists.

The same day, another report by Mr. Hersh quoted intelligence sources to the effect that more than half of the secret funds went to finance the crippling trucking, shopkeeper, taxi and other strikes that preceded the military coup.

In an interview with Mr. Hersh published last Oct. 16, Ray S. Cline, who had served as director of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence at the time of the anti-Allende campaign, said "State and the C.I.A. were dubious" about it. They went along, he said, "because the White House — either Nixon and Dr. Kissinger, or both — decided to push the program."

On Jan. 22, 1975, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee released last week, Mr. Helms said there was "no doubt" in 1970 that the overthrow of Dr. Allende "became a thing that they [the Nixon Administration] were interested in having done."

He conceded that he had erred in withholding information from the panel when he testified before it two years ago. He also suggested the Senators had erred in not asking him the right questions.