

Saxbe Is 'Fed Up' With Claims CIA Meddling in India

NEW DELHI, India, Aug. 12 (AP)—Declaring he is "fed up" with "leftist" charges of CIA involvement in India's political crisis, U.S. Ambassador William B. Saxbe said today he has told Prime Minister Indira Gandhi he would resign if he learned of any U.S. meddling.

Saxbe, departing from the low profile he has maintained since arriving in March, said he has met in Washington with "the highest authorities in all agencies that might be concerned" and "I have assured myself there is no agency of the U.S. government that is in any way interfering in India."

Furthermore, Saxbe said, "I have told Mrs. Gandhi that if I found out to the contrary I would resign."

The outspoken former attorney general and Republican senator from Ohio made his remarks in an informal interview after appearing in an embassy variety show where he donned judicial robes and sang a brief part from "Fiorello."

Saxbe said he is "fed up with some of the wild charges the radical left was making . . . that the state of emergency was brought on by the actions of foreign governments."

He said that in February and again in June he met with officials from the State Department and other agencies and he was assured there was no "interjection of interference" in Indian affair. He added: "I had a close relationship with the CIA when I was attorney general and there was no problem with that."

Asked if he was therefore categorically denying the CIA was involved in India, Saxbe said, "I have no formal charges in front of me to categorically deny . . . the charges have been made by irresponsible elements here, and I'm talking about the leftists. No one responsible has made these charges."

Regarding the U.S. position toward Mrs. Gandhi's June 26 declaration of a state of emergency and suspension of Civil liberties, Saxbe said the Indian government has said the crackdown is temporary and "for the time being we have to accept that."

Saxbe said India had "substantial problems" and that only time would tell if Mrs. Gandhi's method of dealing with them would be effective.

If the internal situation in India worsened, Saxbe said, the United States "would explore what's open, what alternatives are there. That's something that would have to be decided at the highest level. We have a firm commitment not to interfere in any kind of internal affairs."

Saxbe said he has been busy meeting with Indian officials on trade, exchange and other matters since returning to New Delhi June 30 from a six-week stay in the United States.

He said he last met Mrs. Gandhi July 23 but did not say when he offered to resign if he learned of U.S. interference in India. "She is an amazing woman and she works very hard at her job," he said.