

Rep. Harrington Defends His Disclosure of Secret

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WASHINGTON, July 8—Representative Michael J. Harrington today defended as appropriate and responsible his disclosure to follow Congressmen last year of details of sworn secret testimony on the Central Intelligence Agency's political activities in Chile.

At a news conference, the Massachusetts Democrat denounced as "astonishing hypoc-



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Representative Michael J. Harrington speaking to reporters in Washington.

risy" a vote last month by the House Armed Services Committee, to one of whose members the secret testimony was given, to deny him future access to such sensitive classified materials.

The committee's action, Mr. Harrington said, implied that "an informed electorate is a threat to democracy, and that democracy is sometimes a threat to the free world.

"Peculiar as that may sound, it is the only way to explain this country's undermining of a democratically elected Government in Chile in the early nineteen-seventies and the subsequent effort to keep the matter quiet."

The Representative, who has been an outspoken critic of the C.I.A.'s covert political and paramilitary activities abroad, announced that he had taken steps—including a request to

the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct—that were intended to challenge the strictures of "a classification system gone wild."

In answer to a question, Mr. Harrington conceded that, in relating to other members of Congress and a reporter the substance of the C.I.A.'s Chilean operation, he had violated a House rule against disclosing testimony taken in a closed committee session as well as his signed secrecy pledge.

But he insisted that "the important question here is not the rule, but what the rule was designed to prevent, a lack

of knowledge" of the C.I.A.'s multimillion dollar effort to make it impossible for Dr. Salvador Allende Gossens, Chile's Marxist president, to govern.

Moreover, Mr. Harrington declared, "signing a secrecy pledge does not excuse a Congressman or any other citizen from reporting evidence of a crime. Ordinarily those who sign such agreements expect to see references to secret but legal activities.

"The enforcement of such an agreement to keep illegal activities secret is itself illegal."

Details of the testimony of William E. Colby, the Director

of Central Intelligence, on the agency's Chilean operations first became public last September when The New York Times recounted Mr. Harrington's description of the testimony in a letter from him to Representative Thomas E. Morgan, Democrat of Pennsylvania, who is the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. Harrington was asked to testify two weeks later about the source of The Times's report before a special session of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Intelligence, headed by Representative Lucien N. Nedzi, the Michigan

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Democrat who is also chairman of a select committee set up to investigate intelligence-gathering by Federal agencies.

Mr. Harrington told the subcommittee last September that neither he nor his office had been The Times's source of his confidential letter to Mr. Morgan. He said the letter had been an attempt to initiate a Congressional inquiry into Mr. Colby's "troublesome" account of the Chilean matter.

He acknowledged, however that he had discussed various aspects of the Colby testimony with other members and with a reporter for The Washington Post, whom he described as

a "personal friend," but in every case, he said, only to seek advice as to how the information might ultimately be made public.

Mr. Harrington said it was his impression after testifying last year on his handling of the Colby testimony that the matter had been "laid to rest," and he accused the Armed Services Committee of deciding "to resurrect the whole affair" last month in connection with the continuing dispute in the House over the future of the Select Committee on Intelligence Activities.

He noted that the vote of the Armed Services Committee

to halt his access to classified testimony and documents came last June 16, the same day that the House voted overwhelmingly to rebuff an attempt by Mr. Nedzi to resign the chairmanship of the select committee.

Mr. Nedzi's move came after the Democratic membership of the select committee attempted to diminish his authority following the discovery that, as chairman of the Armed Services subcommittee that oversees the C.I.A., he had been briefed a year earlier on some of the agency's attempts at political assassination, but had not explored the matter further.