

Contradictions on Chile

Senate Report, Earlier Testimony Disagree

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Testifying under oath before the Senate Multinational Corporations Subcommittee, former U.S. Ambassador to Chile Edward Malcolm Korry made a series of seemingly unqualified disclaimers of American intervention in the 1970 Chilean presidential election.

Among his assertions on March 27, 1973, were these:

"... It was obvious from the historical record that we did not act in any manner that reflected a hard line; that the United States gave no support to any electoral candidate... that the United States did not seek to pressure, subvert, influence a single member of the Chilean congress at any time in the entire four years of my stay."

The revelations of the Senate intelligence committee in its assassination report last week contradict this and other assertions sworn to by Korry 2 1/2 years ago.

The committee report quotes, for example, a message Korry sent to President Eduardo Frei, long a favorite of Korry and the American diplomatic establishment.

The message, seeking to encourage Frei to join a secret U.S. plan of political intervention to deny the 1970 Chilean election to Salvador Allende, said: "Frei should know that not a nut or bolt will be allowed to reach Chile under Allende. Once Allende comes to power we shall do all within our power to condemn Chile and the Chileans to utmost deprivation and poverty, a policy designed for a long time to come to accelerate the hard features of a Communist society in Chile."

Statements issued in behalf of President Nixon that the United States played no interventionist role in Chile in 1970 also were strongly challenged by the Senate committee's evidence of a

presidentially ordered covert political war against the socialist Allende.

So was the testimony of former Secretary of State William P. Rogers; his successor, Henry A. Kissinger; former CIA Director Richard M. Helms; former Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Charles Meyer and other State Department spokesmen.

Meyer commented earlier this week, "I have the feeling I was part of a James Bond scenario and didn't know it at the time."

Concerning Korry, the Senate intelligence committee reported that the former ambassador recommended to Washington a plan for "a \$500,000 effort in (the Chilean) congress to persuade certain shifts in voting on 24 October, 1970." That was the date of the Chilean runoff election made necessary because Allende failed to win a majority in the

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popular election Sept. 4.

The "Forty Committee," the government's top decision-making body for covert operations, authorized \$350,000 to be spent by the Central Intelligence Agency to bribe members of the Chilean congress to oppose Allende and overturn the results of the popular election. The money was never spent, however, because of fears that the CIA's complicity would leak out.

There was another major contradiction. According to the Senate report, Korry received a go-ahead from Washington after a Sept. 14, 1970 National Security Council meeting to implement what was called the "Rube Goldberg" gambit to deny the 1970 election to Allende. This plan called for the diversion of votes in the Chilean congress to the candidacy of Jorge Alessandri, a conservative and aging politician, who would then resign, leaving the incumbent Christian Democrat, Frei, constitutionally free to succeed himself in the presidency. (Chile's constitution bars a president from succeeding himself.)

In his 1973 testimony to the subcommittee investigating efforts by International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. to block the election of Allende in 1970, Korry said that the United States "did not get involved in the so-called Alessandri formula..."

But a CIA memo, disclosed in a footnote to the Senate committee report, spelled out Korry's role in the Alessandri formula.

"Ambassador Korry was asked to go directly to President Frei to see if he would be willing to commit himself to this line of action. A contingency of \$250,000 was approved for 'covert support of projects which Frei or his trusted team deem important.' It was further agreed that a propaganda campaign be undertaken by the agency (CIA) to focus on the damage of an Allende takeover."

Korrry said yesterday that "I stand by every statement I have made to the committee and to the press." He added that he will testify publicly at the committee's hearings on Chile next week.

The Senate report gave new significance to an internal ITT document that was first reported by columnist Jack Anderson in March, 1972. It alluded to a Sept. 15, 1970, message from the State Department to Korrry in Santiago.

That memo, from ITT field operatives Hal Hendrix and Robert Berrelez, reported to high executives of the firm:

"The big push has begun in Chile to assure a congressional victory for Jorge Alessandri on October 24, as part of what has been dubbed the 'Alessandri Formula' to prevent Chile from becoming a Communist state... Late Tuesday night (Sept. 15), Ambassador Edward Korrry finally received a message from the State Department giving him the green light to move in the name of President Nixon. The message gave him maximum authority to do all possible — short of a Dominican Republic-type action — to keep Allende from taking power..."

Korrry testified in the Senate Multinational Corporations Subcommittee inquiry that "there was no green light or anything approximating it." But he declined to elaborate on his instructions from Washington on the ground that it would be improper for him to discuss the content of an executive communication.

Sept. 15, 1970, was the day, according to the Senate intelligence committee report, that President Nixon ordered Helms to involve the CIA in promoting a military coup d'etat in Chile at a meeting with Kissinger and Attorney General John N. Mitchell.

Other statements by leading administration officials that appear to be contradicted by the evidence of the Senate report were these:

—In his 1972 foreign policy report to Congress, President Nixon, in a reference to Chile, said the United States deals "realistically with governments as they are — right and left." His administration, the President said, pursued a policy of "non-intervention."

—During his confirmation hearings as Secretary of State in September, 1973, Kissinger said that "the CIA was heavily involved in 1964 in the election,

was in a very minor way involved in the 1970 election and since then we have absolutely stayed away from any coups. Our efforts in Chile were to strengthen the democratic political parties and give them a basis for winning the election in 1976..."

Thomas Karamessines, CIA Deputy Director for Plans (covert operations), testified to the Senate intelligence committee that "Kissinger left no doubt in my mind that he was under the heaviest of pressure to get this accomplished and he in turn was placing us under the heaviest of pressures to get it accomplished." Karamessines was speaking of the CIA's covert promotion of a coup by the Chilean military in 1970.

—Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on March 22, 1972, Rogers said: "The United States government did not engage in improper activities in Chile."

—Meyer, testifying before the Senate Multinational Corporations Subcommittee on March 17, 1973, said: "The policy of the government, Mr. Chairman, was that there would be no intervention in the political affairs of Chile. We were consistent in that we financed no candidates, no political parties before or after Sept. 8 (the date of the popular election).

"As the President stated... 'we deal with governments as they are'... We were religiously and scrupulously adhering to the policy of the government of the United States... of nonintervention."

This week Meyer said ruefully: "I never felt then nor now that I was perjuring or lying. The degree to which I was talking about what I knew — and about what I didn't know — will have to be demonstrated."