

State Dept. Briefs Senators

U.S. Was Tipped on Coup

Washington

The U.S. government learned of the military coup in Chile the night before it happened, but policy makers in Washington at "the highest level" decided on a hands-off policy after evaluating the information, an administration official revealed yesterday.

This description of the events leading to the overthrow of Chilean President Salvador Allende was given by a State Department official in a closed briefing for senators, as the Nixon administration sought to dispel speculation of possible U.S. complicity in the ouster of the Marist government.

Jack Kubisch, assistant Secretary of State and U.S. coordinator for the Alliance for Progress, told members of the Western Hemisphere subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that there had been "no involvement by the U.S. government, U.S. corporations,

agencies or citizens," sources reported.

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Senator Gale W. McGhee (Dem-Wyo.) said committee members had told Kubisch that a statement to that effect should be issued at the highest level to quash any possible suspicions and rumors.

According to the information that Kubisch gave the subcommittee, a Chilean officer had mentioned that a coup was brewing to an American officer in Chile. One source said that the tip came "not more than 14 to 16 hours before — maybe as little as ten."

The information was then passed on to "the highest level" in Washington and a decision was made to keep "hands off," the sources said, adding that this meant President Nixon was notified. Apparently, the information was not conveyed to the Chilean regime.

The military takeover immediately posed a potential

embarrassment because American disapproval of the Marist-led regime is well known and because charges of U.S. connivance against the regime were raised last spring before a Senate subcommittee that was investigating the role of U.S. corporations there.

ITT

At that time, there was testimony that the International Telephone and Telegraph Co. had offered to help the CIA prevent the election of Allende. Later, company officials testified, the CIA had approached ITT about waging a campaign of economic sabotage against Chile.

Questioned yesterday about possible CIA involvement in the coup, White House Deputy Press Spokesman Gerald L. Warren denied that the agency had been involved. The State Department also strongly denied U.S. involvement.

Nevertheless, critics of the

Nixon administration's policy in South America blamed the U.S. for helping create the conditions under which the military intervention became an ever stronger likelihood.

TACTICS

Joseph Collins, of the Institute for Policy Studies here, said: "The tactics were economic chaos." Collins said Chile had become "the first victim of the Nixon-Kissinger low-profile strategy," in which credits are withheld while military assistance continues to pro-American armed forces.

Military assistance to the Chilean regime continued throughout the three-year presidency of Allende. However, development loans were halted, and Collins asserted that U.S. companies had put pressure on their subsidiaries and foreign associates not to sell vitally needed equipment and spare parts to Chile.

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