

Pre-Coup Activity Is Denied by U.S.

By Terri Shaw
Washington Post Staff Writer

The State Department yesterday denied persistent reports that the U.S. government had given money to striking truckers and other groups whose violent opposition was a major factor in the eventual military overthrow of Chilean President Salvador Allende.

"Such suggestions are absurd," the denial said. "The U.S. government played no part, financial or otherwise, in that strike or in the other stoppages and protests mounted by the opposition to Allende."

Hortensia Bussi de Allende, the widow of the Chilean president who died in the coup, said in Mexico Wednesday that the 47-day truckers' strike that crippled the Chilean economy before the coup was "financed from the outside."

Mrs. Allende also said that the United States had "a great responsibility in what happened."

On Capitol Hill yesterday, Jack B. Kubisch, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, repeated the government's strong denials of any direct or indirect role in last week's coup.

However, when he was asked about reports that the striking truckers had received money from outside of Chile, Kubisch said he would prefer to answer in executive session, because "I wouldn't want to give a misleading impression abroad" with an answer in public.

When reporters told Kubisch after the hearing that his reply gave the impression that the United States had given money to groups opposing Allende, he said he did not mean to give that impression, but declined to comment further.

Later in the day, the State Department issued the denial.

Kubisch said at the hearing that he expected the United States to resume normal diplomatic relations with the new Chilean government soon.

Observers who follow Latin American affairs suggested that Kubisch may have dodged the question because U.S. intelligence sources had information about money going to Allende's opponents from non-government sources, such as private business, labor unions or other foreign countries.

There have been reports in Chile for years that the Italian and West German Christian Democratic Parties have supplied funds to the Chilean Christian Democrats, the largest political party opposing the Allende government. The Christian Democrats, in turn, accuse the leftist parties of



JACK B. KUBISCH
... executive session

taking money from the Soviet Union.

A high U.S. official insisted that as far as he knew "no U.S. companies and no American individuals gave money to any of the strikers."

Kubisch agreed to appear before the subcommittee in executive session at 10 a.m. next Tuesday. A staff member said the record of that hearing would be published after all classified information is censored.

Several committee members queried Kubisch about reports of continuing reprisals against Allende supporters. They asked why the U.S. government had not urged the four-man ruling junta to protect the civil rights of the many prisoners, both Chilean and foreign, reportedly being held in Santiago.

Kubisch said he understood that between 4,700 and 5,200 prisoners were being held. He said it would be "inappropriate" for the U.S. government to make any efforts on their behalf before normal relations were resumed.

The assistant secretary said that the human rights commissions of the Organization of American States and the United Nations had asked the junta to safeguard the rights of the 10,000 to 15,000 political refugees, most from other Latin countries, who had sought refuge in Chile during Allende's socialist-led government. He said the junta sent a telegram to the U.N. high commissioner for refugees promising that the exiles would not be sent home where many face prison or even death.

Kubisch told the subcommittee that about 2,600 Americans were in Chile at the time of the coup, and that none was able to leave until Wednesday, when "30 or 40" tourists took a plane to Buenos Aires. Normal passenger flights to and from Chile have been suspended since the coup.