

U.S. Reportedly Bugged Allende Embassy

San Francisco Chronicle 19
★ Fri., Nov. 12, 1976

Washington

The FBI reluctantly bugged the Chilean embassy in Washington during the Salvador Allende regime and then forced the Central Intelligence Agency to agree to end the surveillance, according to a forthcoming book about the U.S. intelligence community.

The late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover stopped the bugging in February, 1972, by threatening to tell Congress that it was being done at the CIA's insistence, author David Wise reports.

According to the account in Wise's new book "The American Police State":

Hoover initially refused to install the eavesdropping equipment when the CIA first requested it in mid-April, 1971. A few days later, however, then-CIA Director Richard Helms went over Hoover's head

and got Attorney General John N. Mitchell to reverse the FBI Director's decision.

"The CIA delivered sophisticated bugging equipment to the FBI three days later, and between April 27 and mid-May the FBI got into the embassy and installed several mikes."

For more than eight months, the government listened to conversations inside the embassy, Wise reported. The Chilean ambassador to the United States at the time was Orlando Letelier, who was assassinated here last September 21 when a bomb blew up the car he was driving a short distance from the embassy building.

Around early February, 1972, Hoover threatened to blow the whistle. The FBI Director may have been "still smarting over being reversed by Mitchell," Wise wrote,

but he added in a telephone interview that he did not know why Hoover chose to give the ultimatum when he did.

In any case, Wise said, citing CIA documents about the episode, the CIA caved in promptly and hastily asked that the eavesdropping be stopped. Accordingly, on Feb. 3, 1972, "the FBI either went in and pulled out the miniature transmitters or turned them off by remote control."

Hoover died on May 2, 1972. Less than two weeks later, over the weekend of May 13-15, the Chilean embassy was burglarized in a crime that persistent rumors have attributed to one or more of the Watergate burglars, but which still remains unsolved.

In its investigation of the embassy break-in, the book discloses, the FBI was unable to question a

potentially important witness in Miami who had reportedly told an FBI informant that one of the Watergate burglars was involved.

The potential witness, a Cuban exile in Miami, was murdered in the spring of 1974, apparently shortly after the bureau had set out to question him but before it managed to locate him.

According to Wise, the Chilean embassy was not only burglarized, but was also bugged once again after Hoover's death. According to CIA documents, he said, the agency asked the FBI to "reinstitute coverage" on Dec. 8, 1972, a step that the State Department also "strongly urged."

This time the Hooverless FBI apparently complied without protest. "By the day after Christmas (1972) the bugs were broadcasting again, although there is some evi-

dence," Wise writes, "they may have been turned off or removed again in February, 1973."

The president of Chile during the period in question, Salvador Allende, was a Marxist whose 1970 election the CIA had tried to block on President Nixon's orders.

The plan failed, but the CIA spent \$8 million between 1970 and 1973 to undermine Allende. He died in a military coup that brought down his government in September, 1973.

In other disclosures the book quotes former Nixon White House aide John D. Ehrlichman's vivid recollections of an Oct. 1, 1969, dinner at Hoover's home that Mr. Nixon attended along with Ehrlichman and Attorney General Mitchell.

That night, Wise said Ehrlich-

Gray Lines Strike Ends

Gray Lines Inc. resumed limited sightseeing tour activity yesterday just hours after drivers ratified a two-year contract and ended a six-month strike.

The full winter schedule of tours daily will resume on Sunday, a spokesman said.

man told him, "for hours, Hoover regaled us with stories of 'black bag' jobs, hair-raising escapes and so on. 'Wonderful,' the President kept saying, 'How about that, John?'"