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Kennedy Blast at Nixon Over U.S. Chile Policy

Washington

Senator Edward Kennedy accused the Nixon administration yesterday of standing idly by while the military junta in Chile continues its policy of torture and oppression.

Despite direction by Congress to make every effort to encourage the junta, which overthrew President Salvador Allende last September 11, to respect human rights, President Nixon has remained inactive, labeling the deprivations there as "an internal problem," Kennedy said.

Kennedy made his remarks in a statement issued during an all-day conference called by a bipartisan group

of generally liberal congressmen to hear opinions on Chile before and after the junta overthrew Allende and future U.S. policy toward Chile.

Kennedy said that to date there has been no proof that Washington played a role in the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Allende, a Marxist. But he added: "If one asked whether our policies toward that government were designed to ease economic conditions in Chile and promote economic development, the answer is surely no."

He asserted that the United States snubbed the Allende government when it

took office in 1970, cut economic aid to Chile, and put pressure on international lending institutions to limit development loans and technical assistance.

"It is clear that our policies convey to all the world our dissatisfaction with the election returns in Chile," Kennedy told the conference.

Participants in the meeting were almost solidly against the military junta and U.S.-Chilean policy, past and present, with only two former U.S. ambassadors to Chile, both now retired from the foreign service, voicing any support at all for U.S. policy.

Reuters