

DOUBT ON U.S. ROLE IN CHILE RECALLED

Ex-Intelligence Aide Asserts
C.I.A. and State Dept. 'Went
Along' With Nixon Plan

By SEYMOUR M. HERSH
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WASHINGTON, Oct. 16—Ray S. Cline, a former high-level intelligence official in the Nixon Administration, said today that he was dubious about the ultimate wisdom of the Administration's covert intervention against President Salvador Allende Gossens of Chile but that he supported it because he feared more serious intervention by the Soviet Union.

Mr. Cline, who was interviewed by telephone, is the first high official to permit his name to be used in confirming published reports that the role of the Central Intelligence Agency in the effort to oust the Marxist Government included the direct financing of a number of anti-Allende trade groups and labor unions, including truckers.

Despite warnings about the Allende Government's intentions relayed in the intelligence reports, he said, many high officials did not believe that clandestine operations would accomplish the "goal in mind"—to keep a center coalition alive until 1976.

"State and the C.I.A. were dubious but naturally went along," Mr. Cline said, because the White House—either Nixon and Dr. Kissinger, or both—decided the push the program.

"They key role in this whole thing was in the White House," he added, "but it's impossible to tell whether only one or both were enthusiastic about it because the orders came through Kissinger and the 40 Committee. It was a National Security Council decision and not a decision made by the C.I.A. or the State Department."

'Resistance Strikes'

"Some of the money was intended for financial support of the small businessmen and the truckers in their resistance strikes against the Allende Government," Mr. Cline said. "I think it was very logical to enable those groups to keep alive economically so that we could maintain a core of private entrepreneurs until the 1976 elections."

Disclosed by C.I.A. Chief

The extensive C.I.A. role in Chile became known Sept. 8 when it was reported that the agency's director, William E. Colby, had told a Congressional committee that \$8-million in clandestine funds was authorized for operations against the Allende Government between 1970 and 1973. Dr. Allende died in a military coup that overthrew his Government in September, 1973.

Mr. Cline served as director of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and was directly involved in much of the planning and discussions that went on in the 40 Committee, the top-level intelligence board that oversees all covert operations of the intelligence agency. Before joining the State Department, from which he retired last year, Mr. Cline served more than 20 years with the agency, eventually becoming its deputy director for intelligence.

His account of the assistance to labor groups flatly contradicts both the public and private descriptions of the C.I.A. role presented by President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger.

At a televised news conference on Sept. 16, Mr. Ford said that Dr. Allende had been attempting to suppress opposition newspapers and politicians. He added that the "effort that was made in this case was to help and assist the preservation of opposition newspapers and electronic media and to preserve opposition political parties."

Program Termed Broader

In the interview, however, Mr. Cline said the program—as approved by the 40 Committee, he noted—was far broader.

"What the C.I.A. was trying to do," he said, "was to see that at least 50 per cent and probably 60 per cent of the electorate would be disillusioned by the time of the presidential elections in 1976" — when, under the Constitution, Dr. Allende could not run again.

"Well," the former State Department official added, "by 1973 they were totally disillusioned with him." Mr. Cline was alluding to the protests and strikes in the last months of the Allende Government.

"I decided to speak out because I feel that there's such a superficial understanding as to why the United States has tried to assist democratic political organizations abroad," Mr. Cline asserted.

"I'm not happy about the way I can defend them because I think our strategy was not unreasonable or immoral. It was our duty to preserve institutions which we call free"

He explained that the ultimate goal of the clandestine activities was to enable the center coalition factions of the Christian Democratic party to survive the Allende period. "And," he said, "I think the center groups did survive, as they might not have under a prolonged Allende Communist regime."