

Symington Denies 'Collusion' in 1973

To Protect Helms

NYTimes JAN 24 1976

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23—Senator Stuart Symington said today that he and Richard Helms, former Director of Central Intelligence, privately discussed covert operations in Chile and other "problems" Mr. Helms faced before his Senate confirmation hearings in 1973. But Mr. Symington denied rumors that he had been involved in "collusion" to protect Mr. Helms.

The hearings were held on Mr. Helms's appointment to his present post as Ambassador to Iran.

The Missouri Democrat's remarks came as the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence voted to send to the Department of Justice evidence that committee sources said appeared to contradict Mr. Helms's confirmation hearing testimony on United States operations in Chile.

Meanwhile, the committee chairman, Frank Church, told reporters that former President Richard M. Nixon had agreed to answer under oath written questions from the committee about his decisions on interven-

Continued on Page 13, Column 5

Continued From Page 1, Col. 4

tion in Chile and other matters.

Mr. Symington's private meeting with Mr. Helms has taken on interest here because, according to committee sources, the Senate select committee's file on Chile includes three affidavits that suggest that Mr. Helms was not telling the truth during his confirmation hearings and that Mr. Symington may have been aware of it.

Mr. Symington said he had been plagued with a rumor for the last several weeks that he and Mr. Helms had entered into "collusion" over Mr. Helms's testimony on Chile before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations.

"I have heard the story that I had some collusion with Helms about his testimony . . . some kind of an agreement. Nothing could be farther from the truth," Senator Symington said.

Can't Recall Details

He said that before Mr. Helms's Senate confirmation hearings in February 1973, the two discussed "his problems."

"He came to me with his problems, Mr. Symington said. He said that at that time "I knew he was in trouble" presumably about whether he could be confirmed.

Mr. Symington said the two discussed covert C.I.A. operations in Chile, but he said he

could not remember any details of their discussion. He strongly asserted that nothing Mr. Helms subsequently said under oath in the confirmation hearings contradicted "in any way" what they had discussed privately.

"If I had felt he was not telling the truth, I would have recommended to the chairman [of the Senate committee] that the matter be turned over to the Department of Justice," he said.

He said he was willing to testify to this under oath and that it was the first time in his 31 years in Washington public life that his integrity in handling a matter had been questioned.

Money for Allende Foes

"I have only one thing to leave my children," Mr. Symington said, "and that's my good name."

Mr. Helms's testimony at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's closed session, (the testimony has been made public since) has been under scrutiny by the Department of Justice and C.I.A. officials since December 1974.

For instance, under questioning by Senator Symington about whether Mr. Helms had "any money passed to the opponents of Allende," Mr. Helms answered, "No sir."

Yet, the report of the Senate intelligence committee, on assassination plots quoted C.I.A.

officials and documents that showed that the United States fed millions of dollars to opponents Salvador Allende, the Marxist leader of Chile, both before and after he became President in 1970.

Senator Symington then asked Mr. Helms at the 1973 hearing, "So the stories you were involved in that war are wrong?"

Mr. Helms answered, "Yes sir. I said to Senator [J. W.] Fulbright many months ago that if the agency had really gotten in behind the other candidates and spent a lot of money and so forth, the election might have come out differently."

The intelligence committee reported it had evidence that Mr. Helms, Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and others in the White House and the C.I.A. in 1970 had been involved in a "track it" approach to stopping Mr. Allende. This was said to have included sending three submachine guns and tear gas grenades to military forces to try to foment a military coup d'état aimed at creating an environment in which the army might take over the Government and keep Mr. Allende out of office.

To Dispatch Files

Today, by a 7-to-4 vote, the committee agreed to send this evidence and its other files on Chile to the Department of

Justice. Senator John G. Tower, the vice chairman who is a Texas Republican, and three other senators opposed the transfer mainly on procedural grounds.

The committee by the same vote agreed to send the Department of Justice its evidence on the burglary in 1971 of a Fairfax, Va., photographic studio. The burglary was conducted by C.I.A. agents with the help of local policemen and was first disclosed in the report on intelligence act witness by the Rockefeller commission.

No Sinatra Subpoena

Justice Department sources said earlier that Mr. Helms was under investigation on whether he ordered that the burglary be committed. The C.I.A. was allegedly trying to find out if the owner of the studio and his fiancée, a former agency employee, might be involved in a security breach.

The committee voted to hold back, for the time being, its files on the C.I.A. and Federal Bureau of Investigation mail opening projects and the National Security Agency.

In another action, Mr. Church said, the committee said it saw no reason to subpoena Frank Sinatra, the singer, in connection with C.I.A. ties with the Mafia and the Kennedy Administration. Senator Church said the committee felt it had sufficient evidence on the matter in hand.