

Nixon Admits Plotting to Stop Allende

Washington

Former President Nixon has acknowledged ordering covert actions to prevent Marxist Salvador Allende from coming to power in Chile in 1970. But Mr. Nixon swears he was unaware of Central Intelligence Agency efforts to set off a military coup.

Mr. Nixon's sworn statement, submitted to the Senate intelligence committee, contrasted with the panel's finding that "there is no question that the CIA received a direct instruction from the President ... to attempt to foment a coup."

"The committee's findings are well-founded on the testimony (of other witnesses), and I would stand by them," said committee chairman Frank Church (Dem-Idaho).

Mr. Nixon supplied written answers to 77 questions posed by the committee and given to the former President on February 4. Mr. Nixon's 37-page reply was given to the Senate committee yesterday. At the same time, Mr. Nixon's lawyers gave copies of his replies to the news media.

Mr. Nixon said he approved "possible illegal domestic intelligence gathering methods in the Huston plan because the procedures were consistent with those employed by prior administrations and had been found to be effective by the intelligence agencies."

The Huston plan — authored by Nixon adviser Tom Charles Huston — called for a major escalation of domestic intelligence activities, including the use of illegal burglaries and electronic eavesdropping to obtain information.

"There have been — and will be in the future — circumstances in which presidents may lawfully authorize actions in the interest and security of this country, which if undertaken by other persons, or even by the president under different circumstances, would be illegal," Mr. Nixon said.

Church said he was "very much disturbed" by this statement, calling it "pernicious and dangerous."

Mr. Nixon withdrew approval of the Huston plan in July, 1970, after Attorney General John Mitchell informed him of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's objections and warned him that "the risk of disclosure of the possible illegal actions ... was greater than the possible benefit to be derived."

Mr. Nixon said he was aware of CIA "mail covers" in which the outside of the letters to and from the Soviet Union and China were examined. But he said, "I do not

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remember being informed that such mail covers included unauthorized mail openings."

Mr. Nixon said he knew the government was capable of intercepting telephone calls with foreign embassies. Although he said he had no specific recollection that conversations with the Israeli Embassy were monitored, "it is possible that at some time I may have learned" that conversations were monitored.

Mr. Nixon said it is "quite likely" that he was aware of electronic eavesdropping by the National Security Agency, but that he did not know that private cable companies were turning over copies of overseas telegrams to the government. He said he was aware of the authorized wiretaps on his brother to determine whether Donald Nixon "was the target of attempts by individuals to compromise him or myself." He said he also authorized wiretaps in connection with investigations of news leaks and with the unauthorized distribution of National Security Council documents to the Pentagon.

He stated he did not know

about CIA or FBI break-ins and did not learn about the 1971 burglary of the offices of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist by the White House "plumbers" until 1973. Mr. Nixon stated he had no knowledge of a break-in at the Chilean Embassy.

Mr. Nixon said his answers were given voluntarily and constructed "purely from memory." The intelligence committee released the questions.

One of Mr. Nixon's attorneys said the White House had reviewed the responses for possible unauthorized disclosures before they were given to reporters.

The committee's questions covered three basic areas — CIA operations in Chile, use of illegal intelligence gathering methods cited in the Huston plan, and Mr. Nixon's recommendations for reorganizing the intelligence community.

On the subject of Chile, Mr. Nixon acknowledged that "I instructed CIA director Richard Helms that the CIA should proceed covertly" in an effort "to bring about Mr. Allende's defeat" during the 1970 presidential elections in Chile.

However, Mr. Nixon added that "I do not recall being aware that ... the CIA was attempting to promote a military coup in Chile."

In a report issued last December that detailed CIA involvement in the plotting of a coup, the committee stated that Mr. Nixon "instructed the CIA to play a direct role in organizing a military coup d'etat in Chile to prevent Allende's accession to the presidency."

Mr. Nixon's version is that he directed the CIA merely "to enlist support of various factions, including the military, behind a candidate who could defeat Mr. Allende."

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