

Nixon Had Rumors Of a Chile Coup

Washington

Administration officials said yesterday that President Nixon had received numerous reports in the past year of an impending military coup in Chile, and had decided against taking any action which would either encourage or discourage the overthrow of the government of President Salvador Allende.

The White House and the State Department both sought to counter the view widely held in Latin America that the U.S. had known in advance of the plans for Tuesday's coup which resulted in Allende's death. They also denied again that the U.S. was involved in the coup.

"The administration had been receiving rumors of unrest in the Chilean military for more than one year," White House spokesman Gerald Warren said. "Sometimes they mentioned specific dates and sometimes they did not."

RUMORS

Warren said that "aside from these rumors, the President had no advance knowledge of any specific plan for a coup."

"Our embassy had instructions in the event that any elements in Chile came

to them with any plans for an uprising not to have anything to do with it," Warren said. "And these instructions were followed carefully."

The administration seemed nettled by the spate of articles appearing in the United States and overseas yesterday suggesting some kind of American involvement in the overthrow of Allende, who was second in Latin America only to Cuba's Fidel Castro in his criticism of the United States.

CONCERN

Of particular concern to the administration was the fact that the American embassy in Santiago had received a report that the coup would take place on the day it did.

The White House and State Department said this report, one of several in the same vein, did not reach the desks of responsible officials until after the coup had actually been under way for several hours.

State Department spokesman Paul J. Hare, said that Washington was informed that a coup would take place on September 8. When that did not occur, it was informed by the American embassy of a report of a coup on September 10. Fin-

ally, around midnight on September 10, the embassy "did receive reports that September 11 was to be the date and this, as you know, turned out to be correct."

"It was the best advertised coup in history," one senior official said.

DATES

"There was absolutely no way of knowing beforehand that on any of these dates, including the September 11 date, a coup attempt would be made," Hare said.

Hare also repeated denials that an American naval force of four ships had been told before September 11 to turn around before entering Chilean waters for a scheduled joint exercise.

The force was told on September 10 of rumors of a coup that day, but when it did not occur, the ships set sail on the next day from Peru only to be turned around at mid-morning after the coup began, a department official said.

The embassy in Santiago has been contacted by the new military junta with a note asking for diplomatic relations to be continued, State Department officials said. They said that they expect that Washington would respond favorably once other Latin American countries do so.

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