

CHILE

ORIGINAL FILED CIA

# Helms Admits He Held Back On Testimony

Washington

Former CIA director Richard M. Helms has acknowledged that he gave the Senate Foreign Relations Committee incomplete information regarding CIA's involvement in Chilean politics when he testified before the committee

two years ago.

However, the former CIA director, who is now ambassador to Iran, denied in a closed hearing last month that he had lied to the committee or deliberately misled it. A censored version of his January 22 testimony before the committee was released yesterday.

On Feb. 7, 1973, when Helms' nomination to be ambassador to Iran was being considered, Senator Stuart Symington (Dem.-Mo.) asked if the CIA tried "to overthrow the government of Chile" headed by Salvador Allende, who later died in a coup that overthrew his government in September, 1973.

"No, sir," Helms replied, without elaboration.

Symington then asked: "Did you have any money passed to the opponents of Allende?"

"No, sir," Helms replied.

"So the stories you were involved in that are wrong entirely?" Symington asked.

"Yes, sir."

Questioned in hearings last month about his replies, Helms said that he should have answered "in a much more extensive way."

"I think I made one mistake in that testimony, maybe a serious mistake, but I should have probably asked either to go off the record or to have asked to discuss this matter in some other forum, because you will recall at that time Allende's government was in power in Chile, and we did not need any more diplomatic incidents or any more difficulties than the United States and Chile already were having by 1973, when I testified.

"As far as the earlier statement is concerned, whether the agency tried to overthrow the government of Chile, I answered 'no.' I believe that is true . . .

"I know that the Nixon administration wanted it overthrown, but there was no

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way to do it that anybody knew of, and any probes that were made in Chile to ascertain whether there was any force there that was likely to bring this about produced no evidence that there was any such force."

Referring to CIA funds spent in Chile, Helms said they went to civic-action groups, newspapers and radio stations "to keep alive" opposition voices.

"I did not realize that it went into political parties, I did not think that it had, at least it was my understanding at the time," he said.

Declaring that he had "no intention of lying . . . no intention of deliberately misleading" the committee, Helms said he assumed "a fund of knowledge on the part of you gentlemen which possibly you did not have."

He said he felt "obliged to keep some of this stuff, in other words, not volunteer a good deal of information."

Present CIA director William E. Colby has testified that the CIA sent more than \$8 million to Chile for covert activities between 1970 and 1973.

Helms repeatedly told the committee he did not remember details of the expenditures in Chile. When Senator Frank Church (Dem.-Idaho) asked if \$500,000 was given to opposition leaders in Chile, Helms said he thought it was not given to political parties but to "civic-action groups."

In his testimony last month Helms also told the committee he had totally forgotten a Nixon administration proposal on domestic spying when asked about it in 1973.

"I am being as honest as I know how," he said, "I simply did not remember it." Helms was referring to the so-called Huston Plan, put forward by White House aide Tom Charles Huston, recommending break-ins and other illegal activities to improve domestic intelligence operations.

FBI director J. Edgar Hoover later torpedoed the operation on the grounds it was illegal.

"The whole Huston operation started one morning in the White House when President Nixon called a meeting," Helms said. "The burden of the meeting, as best I recall it, was an injunction from the President to Mr. Hoover to organize a committee of the people there present, and to examine the possibilities of getting increased coverage on Weathermen, Black Panthers; in other words, groups that were causing trouble and difficulties in the United States . . ."

Helms said that he did nothing but increase CIA's activities overseas to see whether there were foreign Communist or other connections with the domestic groups.

He denied an allegation that the CIA ever spied on congressmen and denied that it carried out surveillance activities on Senator Barry Goldwater (Rep.-Ariz.) during his 1964 presidential campaign.

The former CIA director said he knew nothing about the break-in on the West Coast at the offices of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist until Helms read about it in Iran months later in the newspapers.

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