

HELMS SAID NIXON SOUGHT CHILE COUP

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Testimony on the Overthrow of Allende Contradicted Officials' Statements NYTimes

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 9—Richard Helms, the former Director of Central Intelligence, told a Senate committee in testimony released today that there was "no doubt" in 1970 that the Nixon Administration wanted to have President Salvador Allende Gossens of Chile overthrown.

In the days following Dr. Allende's election in September, 1970, Mr. Helms told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in a closed hearing Jan. 22, the overthrow of Dr. Allende, a Marxist, "became a thing that they were interested in having done."

'Incidents' Not Needed

Mr. Helms's flat assertion about the Nixon Administration's intentions toward the regime of Dr. Allende, who was overthrown in a bloody coup d'état in September, 1973, contradicts sworn testimony and public statements by many former officials of the State Department and other Government agencies who had insisted that the United States scrupulously adhered to a policy of nonintervention toward Chile.

Dr. Allende failed to gain a majority of the popular vote in the Sept. 4, 1970, election and, under the Chilean Constitution, his plurality had to be ratified by the Congress on Oct. 24. It was during this seven-week

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Helms Said Nixon Sought Chile Coup

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period, Mr. Helms testified, that the Nixon Administration sought to find ways to overthrow Mr. Allende.

"The Allende Government," said Mr. Helms, "was not even in at the time the probe was made just to see if there were any forces there to oppose Allende's advent as president. It was very quickly established there were not, and therefore, no further effort was made along those lines, to the best of my knowledge, at least I know of none."

In a telephone interview, Edward M. Korry, who served as Ambassador to Chile from 1967 until 1971, recalled that the C.I.A. was asked in late September, 1970, "to find out if there was any real resistance to Allende."

"We weren't talking about extremist groups," he said, "but sizeable forces in the political area."

Mr. Helms, who is now Ambassador to Iran, was summoned to testify before the Foreign Relations Committee because of seeming discrepancies in his testimony at hearings on his confirmation in 1973 over both the extent of the involvement of the Central Intelligence Agency in Chile and in domestic activities inside the United States.

The former C.I.A. director conceded that he had erred in withholding information about the extent of the agency's covert operations against the Allende regime.

"I think I made one mistake in the testimony," Mr. Helms told Senator Clifford P. Case of New Jersey, the ranking Republican committee member. "Maybe it is 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 [February, 1973], Allende's government was in power in Chile and we did not need any more diplomatic incidents."

During his two-hour appearance before the committee, Mr. Helms was pressed to explain his previous testimony only by Senators Case and Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho, who is chairman of the new

Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

During his confirmation hearing, the former C.I.A. chief denied that the agency had sought to overthrow the Allende regime, or had passed any funds to Dr. Allende's opponents. At one point in this hearing, Mr. Helms volunteered the following statement: "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."

He testified in a similar vein during hearings later in 1973 before Senator Church's Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations, which was investigating the links between the C.I.A., the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation and the Nixon Administration's policy toward Chile.

William E. Colby, who became Director of Central Intelligence in mid-1973, told a House committee last April, however, that the Nixon Administration had authorized more than \$8-million for clandestine activities in Chile between 1970 and 1973 in an effort to make it impossible for Allende to govern.

Mr. Colby said that \$1-million had been authorized for covert use in August, 1973, but that only \$50,000 was spent before Dr. Allende's overthrow and death a month later.

Unsworn Testimony

Mr. Helms defended his earlier testimony by telling the Foreign Relations Committee that the money authorized for Chile "went into civic action groups, supporting newspapers, radios and so forth . . . 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. If somebody had said something else, I am prepared to stand corrected."

During more than two hours of unsworn testimony, the former C.I.A. chief also suggested that the Senators had erred in not asking him more pointed questions in 1973.

Last Sept. 19, The New York Times quoted intelligence sources as saying that C.I.A. funds were secretly funneled to striking labor unions and trade groups for more than 18 months before Dr. Allende's overthrow. Mr. Helms was not asked about that in his most recent testimony, nor was he pressed to provide an accounting of the \$5 million that was authorized for so-called "destabilization efforts" against Dr. Allende in 1971, 1972 and 1973. More than half of that money, The Times quoted its sources as saying, was used to provide strike benefits and other means of support for anti Allende strikers and workers.

After telling the Senators about the C.I.A.'s unsuccessful efforts in late 1970 to find support for the overthrow of Mr. Allende, Mr. Helms added, "I cannot understand how anyone

could interpret [the CIA's efforts in Chile] as an attempt to overthrow the Government or believe that they stood a chance of doing so. So that is what I meant when I answer [the] question [by saying] there was really no effort made to overthrow the Government of Chile."

He also cautioned the committee about the words used to describe C.I.A. plans. "They sound exotic, tough, all the rest," he said. "I think when you get the entire story laid out in Chile between 1970 and 1973 you are going to regard that as a pretty pitiful affair. I mean in terms of actually accomplishing anything."

During his testimony, Mr. Helms was not asked in any detail about the recent allegations of C.I.A. involvement in domestic spying activities.