

Thousands Died During Coup In Chile, Sen. Kennedy Says

Reuter

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees, said yesterday the State Department has confirmed reports that thousands of persons were killed in Chile during the September coup against President Salvador Allende.

Kennedy also said "more than four months after the violent overthrow of the Allende government, the junta apparently continues its gross violations of human rights. Reports in many quarters—including our own government as well as the most respected international humanitarian organizations—suggest continued repression, the denial of safe-conduct passes to many political refugees, new waves of arrests, the torture of prisoners, and executions at an alarming rate."

Kennedy urged President Nixon to make "a sharp reversal in American policy toward the Chilean junta and to condition any U. S. military or economic assistance on the junta's respect for human rights and progress in the restoration of constitutional government."

He made the statements in releasing a partially censored version of a Jan. 28 State Department letter replying to a series of questions he submitted to the department on the Chilean situation.

Kennedy said that "although the specific estimates of deaths are classified 'confidential' the response confirms previous reports that

deaths during the overthrow assessment of casualties of the Allende government: "very few hard facts are available and unofficial estimates number in the thousands."

The actual figures were deleted from the copy of the State Department's letter made public by Kennedy. The State Department said in response to a question from Kennedy on the department's change of government: "very few hard facts are available and unofficial estimates vary widely in range. (deletion) A substantial percentage of these persons undoubtedly died during the skirmishing that took place the first day or two of the change of government."