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# Ford Backs U.S. Intervention

CIA activities  
against Allende  
raise question

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Washington—President Ford, already enmeshed in one controversy over his pardon of former President Nixon, appeared to have created another last night by defending U.S. intervention in the domestic affairs of another country. His comments angered the chairman of a Senate subcommittee investigating such intervention.

The President got himself into more hot water in the way he answered a question concerning Central Intelligence Agency involvement in the internal affairs of Chile during the administration of Salvador Allende, who died a year ago in a bloody military coup.

In his press conference last night, Ford gave a general confirmation to reports published recently that the CIA had been authorized to spend as much as \$8,000,000 between 1970 and 1973 to promote opposition to Allende, the first Marxist to be elected president in the hemisphere. Rep. Michael Harrington (D-Mass.) recently disclosed that CIA Director William E. Colby had told a congressional committee that \$5,000,000 was spent on efforts to "destabilize" Allende's government and another \$3,000,000 in support of anti-Allende political candidates.

"Is it the policy of your administration to attempt to destabilize the governments of other democracies?" Ford was asked last night. The President replied that "our government, like other governments, does take certain actions to help implement foreign policy and protect national security." He added that "Communist nations spend vastly more money, than we do for such purposes."

He denied that the U.S. had had anything to do with the Chilean coup but admitted that three or four years ago, there was secret intervention in Chile "to help and assist the preservation of opposition newspapers and electronic media and to preserve opposition political parties." He added, "I think this is in the best interests of the people in Chile and certainly in our best interests."

It was an answer that drew an angry reaction from Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee investigating secret U.S. intervention in Chile. "To excuse this activity on the ground that the Communists spend more money doing it than we do is simply to equate the United States with the Soviet Union," Church said in a telephone interview.

"To justify our action on the basis that it isn't as extensive as that of the Russians—I had thought there was a qualitative difference between this country and the Soviet Union," Church said.

At his news conference, in a follow-up question, Ford was asked under what international law the U.S. had the right to intervene in the constitutionally elected government of another country and whether the Soviet Union, for example, had a similar right to try to destabilize the government of Canada or of the U.S.

Ford replied, "I'm not going to pass judgement on whether it's permitted or authorized under international law. It's a recognized fact that, historically as well as presently, that such actions are taken in the best interest of the countries involved."

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee was to meet in closed session today, reportedly to consider a staff report recommending that a perjury investigation be made concerning the testimony of former CIA Director Richard Helms and others about U.S. involvement in Chile. Last night, however, Ford insisted that "the appropriate congressional committees" are kept informed of "every covert operation undertaken by our government."

Rep. Lucien Nedzi (D-Mich.), chairman of the House Armed Services subcommittee that supervises the CIA, said last night, that seemed to be case now. "We have been fully apprised," he said. "Things are different at the present time. We are getting complete information." Although he declined to comment on the situation in Chile, Nedzi said, "In the abstract, I can't defend meddling in the internal affairs of constitutionally elected governments."

Nevertheless, Ford was blunt last night about continuing that policy of covert operations. "It seems to me that the 40 Committee [a panel set up in 1948 to review all U.S. covert operations] should continue in existence, and I am going to meet with the responsible congressional committee to see whether or not they want any changes in the review process."

According to one White House staffer, Secretary of State Kissinger's staff had been worried about how Ford would handle foreign policy questions at his last press conference. But at that time he answered them well.

Last night was a different story. "How'd you like his answer on the Chile question?" one secretary was overheard to ask her White House boss. "That was neat—Everybody does it, but they spend more money on it than we do." They both laughed.

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