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AN INTERVIEW WITH REP. HARRINGTON AND DR. CLINE

MARTIN AGRONSKY: One year ago today the Marxist government of Chilean President Salvador Allende was overthrown and Dr. Allende died in the coup. It's isn't certain yet whether he committed suicide or was murdered.

Secretary of State Kissinger said after the coup, "The CIA had nothing to do with the coup, to the best of my knowledge and belief."

This week, secret testimony by William Colby, the Director of the CIA, to a House subcommittee last April leaked out. Mr. Colby revealed in that testimony that from 1970 to 1973 the CIA had been authorized by the U.S. Government to spend \$8 million to help bring down Allende's government, and earlier, another 3 million of CIA money was made available to prevent Allende's election.

The publication of Mr. Colby's testimony has raised once again grave questions about the CIA's covert activities against foreign governments and the lack of the agency's accountability to the American public.

Tonight on Evening Edition a discussion of the CIA's role in Chile and the implications for our foreign policy with Democratic Congressman Michael Harrington of Massachusetts, a longtime critic of the CIA whose letter contained the Colby testimony, and Dr. Ray Cline, the former Deputy Director for Intelligence of the CIA and now the Executive Director of Studies for the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies.

But first, here is the headline news.

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AGRONSKY: Gentlemen, let's establish the basis for this discussion. It comes, obviously, from your letter, Congressman Harrington, that you wrote in July to the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. Morgan. In the letter you expressed concern about the secret testimony of the CIA Director, William Colby, last spring before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Intelligence. And Colby testified about the extent and the real extent of CIA involvement in Chile.

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Now to begin with, the letter has now been leaked. Who do you think leaked the letter?

REP. MICHAEL HARRINGTON: I have suspicions, Martin, but no particular proof. I don't even know that that's not to a degree a diversion, but if you want my theory...

AGRONSKY: Yeah.

REP. HARRINGTON: I think it came out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and not out of the House.

AGRONSKY: And for what purpose?

REP. HARRINGTON: Identical letters were sent to both, and it would not have been difficult to decide to direct attention to the House.

I assume for the purpose that brings us together tonight, to get a broader airing than the kind of closed circuit that often exists between members of the committees engaged in oversight and those that they're supposed to be overseeing, and the end result being lack of dissemination of potentially troublesome information.

AGRONSKY: Well, this is troublesome information.

Now, Dr. Cline, you have a long background in the CIA. Are you glad the information is now published?

DR. RAY CLINE: I am glad that there is a chance to discuss seriously the concept and the policy of trying to use American influence in foreign countries, secretly as well as openly, which we do with our diplomacy and our foreign aid and so forth. I feel the discussion may be a little tendentious because of the feeling of sinfulness about CIA activities generally. Therefore I hope we can shed some illumination as well as some heat on this subject.

AGRONSKY: I don't want to put a black hat on you, Dr. Cline, or on the CIA. That isn't the point. But I would like to call attention, and I'll do this on your behalf, Mr. Congressman, that Congressman Harrington's point in his letter, in which he said, to use his language, he had never subscribed before to the conspiracy theory about the U.S. involvement in the disintegration of the Allende government in Chile, but, he said, after he read what Colby had testified to, that he changed his mind.

Now, Congressman Harrington, can you explain why you changed your mind? Maybe Dr. Cline can then address himself to that.

REP. HARRINGTON: Sure. Let me first of all absolve Ray partially. I'm not here at all to suggest that the CIA doesn't have a useful role. And the intelligence-gathering and evaluation facet of the CIA activities

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has a fan [sic]. I think Dick Helms in the period that I was on the Armed Services Committee, and his predecessors and successors, in giving balance to what is an overblown evaluation often given us by the military in the furtherance of their own aims, provide a very useful function.

DR. CLINE: Good. Good, I'm glad you feel that.

REP. HARRINGTON: Covert, paramilitary, clandestine operations directed, whether they be to Laos or they be, in this instance, to a democratically elected Socialist or Marxist in a country with a very stable political tradition is another story altogether. That's where I basically made my condemnation of the practice.

To go to the question that you pose, of why I changed my mind. My theory, if I had one, Martin, ran not to looking to a simple explanation for a complex series of events. Salvador Allende was his own worst enemy in many ways -- in economic policy that was practiced, inability to deal with his own fragmented political base. I thought what we were doing, and saw some evidence of it, was engaging in economic starvation, an effort at destabilization from using our third party presence in International Development Bank loans, World Bank loans, and our own economic programs to make life untenable for Allende.

AGRONSKY: We even had the extraordinary situation that emerged during the Watergate business of the ITT, the International Telegraph and Telephone Company, admitting that it had proposed a million dollars be given to the CIA to bring about the downfall of the Allende government, which the CIA said it rejected.

Now the thrust of the whole thing is, the thrust that concerns me and that concerns Congressman Harrington, is that the Colby testimony indicates indeed that we supported -- and that first we tried to prevent Allende's election, and after he was elected, we did everything we could through the overt actions, such as holding back loans and all the rest, to use the U.S. Government in that way, holding back commodity credits and things like that from the Allende regime to bring the government down, and then we used the CIA to support the Allende opposition, which eventually did bring him down.

And the question we raise is that in principle, is it right for the government of the United States to try to bring down, to subvert another government?

DR. CLINE: Well, Martin, that's a pretty complicated question. It's almost a speech. And I've got to make a couple of comments on it before I try to answer it.

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AGRONSKY: Go ahead. Sure.

DR. CLINE: To start at the back end of it, when you said that CIA did finally bring Allende down, I think you're quite wrong about that.

AGRONSKY: Not the CIA. I say they contributed to the opposition.

DR. CLINE: The government fell in Chile, and the testimony which Mr. Colby gave to the Congress indicated that the CIA, on instructions from the government, was trying to support the moderate left opposition to Allende, the center and left groups, the Christian Democrats and so on, whom the U.S. Government had supported for many years.

The second thing -- we've got to a little back of this present Allende situation because the quotations attributed to Colby make it clear the U.S. policy of supporting a group of politicians and a moderate group of Chilean citizens goes back to 1964 when the first administration of Eduardo Frei was elected.

AGRONSKY: You supported the Christian Democratic Party.

DR. CLINE: That's right. And I wanted to stress that because I believe this is also true, even in 1970 and '71, the policy of the U.S. Government overtly, and when it acts covertly, also covertly, is very seldom to destroy anything. It is certainly not a skillful group of revolutionists. It is a policy of supporting people in foreign countries whom we feel are interested in an economic system and a political system that we ourselves would like to see prevail.

AGRONSKY: But, Dr. Cline, you make it sound so benign and so wonderful and so democratic, and you're supporting this democratic element. But what is the result in Chile?

Allende goes under. A military junta succeeds him, a military junta that apparently has carried out a number of executions, that keeps people in concentration camps.

DR. CLINE: Martin, let me...

AGRONSKY: You have a military dictatorship.

DR. CLINE: Let me interrupt just to say what I think may not be clear from the way we've spoken so far. I don't believe anyone has accused the U.S. Government or CIA, nor has Colby suggested, that this government overthrew Allende in the coup and set up the junta. That was indeed the result of a lot of actions in '71 and '72.

AGRONSKY: I'm not suggesting that. I'm saying that's what happened. Yeah.

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DR. CLINE: And it is possible that the opposition to Allende, which was supported by us, according to the testimony and most of the open news we know, was assisted by the U.S. attitude and by direct U.S. support.

But I feel myself what happened in Chile, for the reasons that the Congressman said, was almost inevitable, that the 350% inflation, the determined effort to squeeze out the Christian Democratic group, which tended to dominate the Congress, and go to some other form of government -- plebiscites or one-party rule or whatever -- which would support Allende's revolution was going to bring exactly the reaction it did from the middle class and the military.

AGRONSKY: Well, you say Allende's revolution. Allende was democratically elected.

DR. CLINE: Allende was supported by two very strong revolutionary parties which said they were looking for a Marxist Chile, state ownership, eventually one-party dictatorship, and so forth.

Eduardo Frei was for revolution too. He was for a revolution with liberty. I would say Allende was for a revolution ultimately without liberty, and a lot of Chilenos didn't like that.

REP. HARRINGTON: Let's not really get distracted to a degree, Ray, because I think that it's important to understand, before we get the tag Marxist or Socialist coloring the emotions -- you have a stable or relatively stable political tradition in Chile. You have an election that no one has seriously questioned was not fairly and openly run, and you have a perennial candidate who came power after two, I think, unsuccessful tries prior to that in the earlier period of the '60s.

AGRONSKY: Allende.

REP. HARRINGTON: Allende. And I don't find anything at all, whatever may be the problem he created for himself or the threat posed to our view of what the world should be, that commends itself to me in an era of fundamental change in American foreign policy, witnessed by China and Russia in the late '60s, that remotely gives an intellectual or rational basis for conduct of this kind to be engaged in against a government that is coming to power in a way that we commend to the rest of the world to emulate.

DR. CLINE: Well, I don't entirely agree with you, but the points you make about the situation are sound, except you did not add that the Allende election was by a 36% plurality, not...

REP. HARRINGTON: ...by bribing the Chilean Congress, a plan

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proposed and accepted by the Committee of Forty, then rejected because it wouldn't work.

DR. CLINE: Which was totally unsuccessful, if it was ever attempted.

REP. HARRINGTON: I'm again citing the words of the Director of the CIA.

DR. CLINE: The point -- I think the struggle that took place in Chile, which we must understand before we discuss why we wanted to have it come out a given way, is that the unity group, the Communist Party and the Socialist Party and the Radical Party, were trying...

REP. HARRINGTON: You mean the [unintelligible], the far left.

DR. CLINE: ...were trying to take action in Chile in the economic, social and political sphere on the basis of a plurality vote which never got the support of a large percentage -- I won't say whether it's more than 36%. I suspect it was...

REP. HARRINGTON: It [unintelligible] gradually over the period of Allende's tenure.

DR. CLINE: And certainly by the time Allende had run the country into the ground, it may have been 50 or 60 percent. That's what we were supporting, is the right of those people to continue to give parliamentary opposition to the movement toward nationalization and one-party government in Chile.

Now I am willing to discuss whether it was -- the situation was properly conceived. But I did want to say this is what we were talking, being for a kind of society and government, not necessarily being against a government, and certainly not overthrowing it in a military coup, which we didn't do.

AGRONSKY: Dr. Cline, you can't just wash your hands and just walk away and say, "Too bad. We were really against Allende, but we never assumed that when Allende went he would be succeeded by a military junta."

I think there is a fundamental demonstration of atrociously bad judgment on the part of the United States in not recognizing that this may result from the overthrow of the Allende government.

DR. CLINE: I don't think that was neglected at all. It was discussed many times in the period of Allende's rule as to how it would all end. I think in the State Department and in CIA and, as far as I know, in the White House people thought it would end badly, and the question was whether it could work itself out so there would be a political solution at the end

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through some form of representative government, or whether there would be a revolution. If there was to be a revolution, it would be because Allende had polarized the country, and the military acted lest they be cut out of the action. They feared assassination of military leaders and a successful change in the system of running the...

REP. HARRINGTON: I'm bothered by this ex post factor rationalization. From the day...

DR. CLINE: I'm talking about arguments we'd had back at the time, seriously.

REP. HARRINGTON: The day Allende took power, whether it be a figurative snub of his presence or it be efforts made to dissuade the Navy from using a naval base, again ceremonially, or a variety of loans, which at least are questionable as to why they were suddenly chilled or at least dampened as far as their application to that country, or other things of that general nature, which may be more in the substance of symbol than reality as to how they affected our relationship with the country, we did not demonstrate the kind of willingness that we're professing at one level, of pluralism in this world, toward Allende. And nobody was suggesting for a moment he had stolen or used brute force to achieve power in that country.

Where's the ethic that has us saying...

DR. CLINE: No, no. It was what he was doing after he was elected that caused the difficulty in the attitude toward Chile. Ambassador Corey has said that at the time of the election, he was approached by representatives of Allende, as well as the other principal parties in Chile, asking the United States to give a million dollars to each of them, which he refused. And during that first election, to the best of my positive knowledge, we did not try to influence the election at all. It was when the...

REP. HARRINGTON: That's at variance with the testimony of...

DR. CLINE: No, I don't think you're right.

AGRONSKY: The testimony of Colby is...

[Confusion of voices]

DR. CLINE: Where is the sentence that says in 4 September 1970, in the election in Chile, the U.S. used its influence covertly or overtly to influence this election?

AGRONSKY: \$500,000 during the 1970 election -- I quote Mr. Colby now -- to opposition party personnel.

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DR. CLINE: And that includes the congressional election of October. That's what you're talking about.

REP. AGRONSKY: No. This includes...

AGRONSKY: Five million dollars after Allende election for, quote Mr. Colby, more destabilization efforts.

DR. CLINE: Yeah. That's later. We're talking about the election itself. I honestly think your letter, which I of course...

AGRONSKY: \$350,000 -- I again quote Mr. Colby -- during the 1970 election to bribe, I quote, to bribe the Chilean Congress, which at that time was faced with deciding a runoff election between Allende and the opposition candidate.

DR. CLINE: You see, but you're talking -- do you know when that election was? It was October, not September, 1970. I am speaking about the popular election in which he got 36% of the vote. It was, in fact, the view of all of the experts in our government that that election would be very close, but that Allende would probably lose it. And in fact, there was no intervention in that popular election, and I think the record should make that clear.

I believe you naturally misread it, because that's the tendentious way in which these things are usually stated.

REP. HARRINGTON: Let me try to be non-tendentious for the moment and again go back to what my memory is, since I was privy to this material on the basis of reading only, and cite my memory, rather than have Mr. Colby as the person in some fashion having to defend what is referred to as his statement.

That \$500,000, or thereabouts, in June of 1970, on the initiative either of your station in Chile or the NSC or whatever, was approved to be used for the purpose of activities designed to thwart the prospective election of Salvador Allende. Now we can semantically dance around what interpretation one can make of it, but we were involved heavily in attempting to say, "We don't want Allende to come to power," and acting on the National Security Council level in the spring of that year to insure it.

AGRONSKY: And, Dr. Cline, I think there's another point here. The whole business of Watergate has made us understand the importance of spokesmen for our government telling the truth (A) to the Congress and (B) to the American people.

Now let me quote to you the Secretary of State of the United

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States, Mr. Kissinger. He said shortly after the coup in which Allende was either murdered or committed suicide, that -- I quote Mr. Kissinger -- "The CIA had nothing to do with it, to the best of my knowledge and belief."

DR. CLINE: This is an example...

AGRONSKY: This is after he is the head of the 40 Committee which works with the CIA and which allocates all this money.

DR. CLINE: What do you think "it" was in that sentence? It had nothing to do with what? -- the coup overthrowing Allende.

AGRONSKY: "Had nothing to do with it" is the coup, yes.

DR. CLINE: I think that's right. We didn't even know for sure it was coming. You see, he's talking about the specific revolution against Allende, and I do not think the U.S. Government did have anything to do with it.

AGRONSKY: Well, that's kind of selective, you know.

REP. HARRINGTON: You bet he is, Ray, because that's the State Department-CIA line, whether it's Jack Kubrich (?) or it's Schlotterman (?) or it's Kissinger or it's someone else, rooting themselves firmly in sand -- "We did not participate in the development of or the execution of a coup designed to overthrow Allende."

DR. CLINE: That is true. I can assure you that is exactly true.

REP. HARRINGTON: But the rest of it, which I think is a slight departure from that as far as a prolonged period of activity, with the term used by Colby, an effort at political destabilization, has to, to me, assume consequences which go toward an end result in a coup, given the Latin American tradition of solving their problems in that fashion.

DR. CLINE: Well, but as you pointed out, that money earmarked for destabilization got spent only to the extent of about \$34,000.

REP. HARRINGTON: No, sir. No, sir. That's on August 20th of last year, the last phase of this \$11 million.

DR. CLINE: In 1973, yeah.

REP. HARRINGTON: In 1973, well after ITT and well after the domestic role of the CIA becomes a part of the American consciousness, this group still gathers in Washington and again decides to appropriate one million dollars more to further political destabilization.

AGRONSKY: Dr. Cline, I really want to pin you on this point.

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I really think this is terribly important. I quote again. Colby testifying said \$350,000 during the 1970 election -- I quote Colby again -- "to bribe the Chilean Congress, which at that time was faced with deciding a runoff election between Allende and the opposition candidate."

Now, that's Colby.

DR. CLINE: After the 4 September election.

AGRONSKY: Okay. Now we have the former Assistant Secretary of State Charles Meyer, testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations last spring, saying -- I now quote the former Assistant Secretary of State, Mr. Meyer -- "We bought no votes. We funded no candidates. We promoted no coup."

DR. CLINE: Isn't this the campaign that was said to be found unworkable. You see, Martin, I think you're distinguishing -- you're not distinguishing between resolutions passed by this National Security Council body, usually called the 40 Committee, which can set aside money and it can make speeches, and then it asks CIA if it can do something covert.

REP. HARRINGTON: This is not a [unintelligible]. This is closed testimony in a room with four people in it in April of this year, with a compatible kind of arrangement where the Director of the CIA is asked to respond to questions on the CIA role.

DR. CLINE: That's right. And he was trying to describe what happened, and what he said was that the NSC 40 Committee authorized the expenditure of these funds for these purposes. And in fact, of course, the election did go to Allende, very little was accomplished, and so forth.

But let me make one other point.

REP. HARRINGTON: They went back for more on the municipal elections of the spring of '71 and the...

DR. CLINE: And I still hold to my view that if the CIA and the U.S. Government had taken none of this covert action, almost identically the same course of events would have followed in Chile.

REP. HARRINGTON: But that's beside the point.

AGRONSKY: I don't care if their policy failed. That's not relevant.

DR. CLINE: But that's what you're worrying about.

REP. HARRINGTON: No, it isn't.

AGRONSKY: It isn't. It's the principle of involvement that I worry...

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DR. CLINE: What I wanted to say is that CIA did not have a policy. CIA is an instrument, and it is directed, technically, by the President, and the President can speak authoritatively through NSC officials if he wishes to, and the 40 Committee directs CIA. Often -- and I can certainly tell you that this kind of program goes back to Harry Truman in '49. There are 5 or 10 major episodes when the Presidents and the State Department and the Defense Department thought CIA should do this kind of thing. They usually didn't accomplish very much...

AGRONSKY: Well, I'm bored with that argument too.

DR. CLINE: ...but in any case, they were the instrument of a policy of the U.S. Government.

AGRONSKY: I don't care to go back to Harry Truman. If Harry Truman did something that was wrong, it doesn't mean we should continue today to do something that is wrong.

DR. CLINE: But I do think that the terminology that always appears is that CIA is interfering -- I think you used it, Mr. Congressman -- in the conduct of foreign policy in a secret and dangerous way. That is not true. It does what it's told to in this field.

REP. HARRINGTON: Let me just for the sake of my memory, again, on Bill Colby's more interesting testimony, which after the recitation factually of what went on in Chile, getting into the actual method of operation, at least as I would envision him describing it in Chile.

It's almost as though the State Department is brought in to be a benign patsy to events that are initiated and executed by the CIA, and for the sake of propriety and for the sake of no intra-disciplinary problem, washed up the ladder to get approval at the Committee of 40 level, and down again.

The State Department I would fault only for being a bystander and being culpable as a bystander. But I look at the CIA for more than just a mere of instrument...

DR. CLINE: You know, I was in the State Department, not in CIA, during this whole period. I was the chief of intelligence...

AGRONSKY: But you're an old CIA...

DR. CLINE: ...in the State Department. I'd resigned from CIA, and I observed these things from the point of view of the Secretary of State.

I think the State Department probably did not exercise its influence as vigorously as it should have in the 40 Committee. I think the whole NSC

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system was not working very well at that time, and I think we can fault our government on the planning...

REP. HARRINGTON: Well, the whole NSC system was Henry Kissinger. Then and now.

DR. CLINE: Whatever it was, it did not bring about a serious good discussion of this policy, and I think it could be criticized. It's probably the end of this kind of operation.

REP. HARRINGTON: I hope so.

AGRONSKY: Congressman Harrington, just a few seconds, have you any plan to make the CIA more accountable?

REP. HARRINGTON: That effort has been ongoing over my rather abbreviated career in the Congress, without a great track record to date. I suspect that this sort of thing, coupled with other revelations which have occurred, may get us a little bit further along that line.

AGRONSKY: You think it should be accountable?

DR. CLINE: I think it should be accountable in a responsible way and one which hopefully would not cause the kind of leaks which started this program tonight.

AGRONSKY: Okay. Gentlemen, thank you very much.

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