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SUBJECT Controversy Involving Helms and An Aide

NOAH ADAMS: Administration sources confirmed today that the FBI is investigating an aide to Republican Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina.

The aide, Christopher Manion, is suspected of having leaked secret information to the Chilean government.

Senator Helms has strongly denied that he or his staff had anything to do with the alleged leak. Helms has charged that the State Department is orchestrating a smear campaign against him.

NPR's Richard Gonzalez reports.

RICHARD GONZALEZ: The alleged leak involves the ability of U.S. intelligence to monitor internal communications of the Chilean armed forces. It is through intercepted messages like these that U.S. officials reportedly learned of undisclosed details of the July burning death of Washington resident Rodriguez Rojas. Government troops have been accused of Rojas' murder.

Sources also said the intelligence technology also allows unspecified contact with a growing opposition to President Augusto Pinochet within the Chilean armed forces.

Administration sources say that Manion, who is being investigated by the FBI, attended a Senate Intelligence Committee briefing on Chile. Information on intelligence technology disclosed at that briefing eventually made its way to the Chilean government. However, a Helms staff member denied that Manion could have been privy to information from this source since the Intelligence Committee briefing was open only to its members and staffers.

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