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BUSH TRIED TO BAR PROBE OF CIA ROLE IN CHILE, PAPER SAYS

REUTERS
 Date 30 Sept. 88

WASHINGTON, Sept 30, Reuter - George Bush as CIA director attempted to block a federal investigation of agency operations in Chile in 1976, the Los Angeles Time said on Friday.

Bush attempted to hold back documents on earlier Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) activities in Chile which the Justice Department sought for a federal grand jury, according to files in the Gerald Ford presidential library in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the newspaper said.

In October, 1976, Bush who was then CIA director, pleaded the need to protect intelligence sources in a dispute with the Ford White House and Justice Department over the documents and permission for CIA witnesses to appear before the jury.

The grand jury was investigating charges that former CIA director Richard Helms and some of his officers had lied to Congress about Chilean operations.

The CIA was suspected of playing a major role in the 1973 Chilean military coup in which Marxist President Salvador Allende was killed.

President Ford had publicly pledged cooperation with Congress in its post-Watergate probe of CIA clandestine operations.

The newspaper said Bush wrote in a memo to the White House: "I mean to do whatever is necessary and appropriate to carry out my statutory mandate to protect intelligence sources and methods."

Eventually the White House instructed Bush to let federal prosecutors have the evidence they sought.

The investigation led in 1977 to a plea of no contest by Helms to two criminal charges of lying to Congress. He was fined 2,000 dollars and given a two-year suspended sentence.