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DISCUSSION OF CIA ACTIONS IN CHILE

HOST: MAURY POVICH

GUEST: WILLIAM BUCKLEY, JR.

MAURY POVICH: But when you think of--and you had to deal with Chile a little bit last year--it came up before the General Assembly--what happens when a story like this, and to date there's no one to deny the existence of the story that President Ford himself said, in effect, the CIA was spending money during the Allende years to destabilize the country, and that I assume--

WILLIAM BUCKLEY: Well, I don't think--now, wait a minute--

POVICH: --to destabilize the government--

BUCKLEY: I think that's using an enemy vocabulary. Nothing was more destabilizing than what Allende was trying to do to Chile. To the extent that we helped the opposition, we did our best to stabilize, not to destabilize. We destabilized the destabilizing plans of Allende.

POVICH: Then we have to make a moral judgment, do we not, on the question of whether the Allende government is good or bad for Chile? And why should we be making those judgments in the first place, in that that is messing up the internal affairs of another sovereign state, and that's not supposed to be our purpose?

BUCKLEY: Well, in the first place, let's put a little historical perspective on it. From Wilson through Jack Kennedy it was very definitely our purpose. Now, Kennedy's most famous inaugural address was the one in which he said, we will spare no pains, we will avoid no burden, we will work if necessary alone

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to guarantee the survival of liberty everywhere in the world. This was a pledge for us, the United States, to go out and work for freedom in every situation. Now we've renounced that. Viet Nam--you know, Camelot people don't quote the inaugural address much any more. But from Wilson through him--(BOTH TALK AT ONCE).

POVICH: The roots go much deeper than Dr. Kissinger--

BUCKLEY: Sure. But since then there has been a retreat from that. It's been a retreat, however, not so total as to say that we refuse to extend any help of any sort to people who attempt to resist what looks like the colonization of their country. Now, Allende's experience in Chile is often thought of as a purely indigenous matter, and of course wasn't. The Soviet Union spent many times as much money as we did, and one has only to survey its overt activities to guess at the size of the--

POVICH: I thought we were supposed to be out of those entanglements. Whether the Soviet Union was helping one side or another, that we were not supposed to be embroiled in that sort of situation, because that can always blossom into a Viet Nam type--

BUCKLEY: I can't imagine circumstances under which we would have sent Marines into Chile, if that's your question. But short of sending Marines into Chile, it seems to me that there are certain things that Congress seems to want to do. Take Fulbright. Fulbright is considered really the most isolationist of the lot. Here's how he put it as recently as three years ago, quote, the United States has no proper quarrel with any country, no matter how obnoxious its domestic doctrines, except insofar as it attempts to export them. Now, there is no question there was an effort to export communist revolution by Cuba, for instance. Castro was Allende's idol, and Castro ran guns into Chile. We know that he tried to revolutionize Bolivia. Che Guavero was caught and shot doing it. We know that he tried to do it to Venezuela. Venezuela came to the OAS and begged us to impose a boycott.

Now, to what extent was Chile such an attenuation of that as to fall within or without the Fulbright doctrine? We don't necessarily know.

POVICH: You didn't bristle, though, when there seemed to be approval of that sort of policy?

BUCKLEY: No.

POVICH: The President the other night, to me, when he

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said in his news conference that that is a fact of life, it is going to remain so, it was in our natural interest to do that, I would approve, everything I have seen I would have approved of. That seems to me that we are still ready and willing to send money and men, clandestine as the purpose might be, to undermine governments, no matter whether--indeed, if they are communist or not.

BUCKLEY: Well, Allende's government was certainly headed towards communism, and anybody whose hero is Fidel Castro is--he called himself a Marxist. He had been with the socialist party, and the socialist party was pretty much dominated by the communists. Let me ask this. Suppose Allende had hired a bunch of scientists and said, make me an atom bomb. Would you say there was anything left for the CIA to do under those circumstances?

POVICH: I don't know, because I don't know what we do when it comes to--obviously that has happened before in other countries. Most of them come to the United States for aid when they want to build an atom bomb, like India, or something to that effect.

BUCKLEY: Yeah, but we now know that the technology is footloose, and you can coax people to come and build you an atom bomb if you just pay enough for it--(BOTH TALK AT ONCE)--

POVICH: Chile had the capabilities, in other words, of gathering together scientists to make an atom bomb.

BUCKLEY: Right. Now, wouldn't you say under the circumstances like that it would be useful for the CIA to make it as hard as possible for them to get fissionable material?

POVICH: Yeah, but I don't think it would run that course, though.

BUCKLEY: Ah--but then you agree in principle, and it's a question of whether we run that course.

POVICH: Well, I think you're taking very extreme possibilities, the question of atom bombs. I think Allende's main problem was being able to govern without outside interference.

BUCKLEY: Well, do you--well, obviously--for instance, Nixon wanted to govern without the outside interference of the Washington Post. Now, if he had been Allende, he would have closed it down.

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POVICH: At least that's an internal organization.

BUCKLEY: Yeah, but presumably if Nixon had done to the Washington Post what Allende almost did to El Mercurio, you would have been very grateful for any government that gave you enough money to pay your printer's bill, right?

POVICH: It just seemed a long way from the United States' problems to the support of certain newspapers in Chile. It just seems more than an ocean apart.

BUCKLEY: Well, exercise your soritical imagination. The fact of the matter is that the Monroe Doctrine is a very old part of American history, and a line from Moscow through Cuba through Chile is not something in the foreshortened days of travel that is such a long way. And it is true that democratic resistance in Chile was being strangled, and we gave some help to the people who were being strangled. Only after a year and a half, you know, if we're to believe the testimony of that court.

POVICH: Let me wrap up this topic by asking you that-- many members of the Congress were upset, not because we were in Chile, but that there was no Congressional overview, or that maybe what we were being told by the CIA was not in fact the truth as to what was happening. Do you feel upset about that-- that although there was supposed to be Congressional review, there wasn't?

BUCKLEY: No. My understanding is that the CIA did tell the truth, and that it is alleged that the State Department did not.

POVICH: Ah, true. I'm sorry. It was Dr. Kissinger's--

BUCKLEY: That's right. The CIA told exactly what it was doing. A committee was set up by Congress, not by the executive, this co-called Forty Committee, to oversee. Now, incidentally, as a result of the leak of Colby's testimony, the whole CIA operation is in jeopardy. And this anxiety--

POVICH: Which means that you're opposed to the leak, not the operation--

BUCKLEY: Absolutely. No, I want Congress to oversee the CIA, and any way it does it that makes sense to me to use, okay by me. But to do this, and then to invite testimony which is then leaked, and exposes operations that oughtn't to be exposed, strikes me as simply a way of eviscerating the entire organization.

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POVICH: But if in effect the Congress did not have a chance to review the policy, it is an illegal operation, to say the least.

BUCKLEY: Well, Congress confirms the people who sit on the Forty Committee, or in most cases.

POVICH: With Congressional review. Has that not been always the policy of that committee?

BUCKLEY: Not in total detail. Most often, when a Congressional committee asks a particular person what concretely did the CIA do in Mexico City, they decline on the grounds of executive privilege to give that information out. But if there are grounds to suspect that what was done in the City of Mexico was contrary to the instructions of Congress, or the desires of Congress, then obviously they have simply the right--I was asked by a former President of Mexico when I ran into him in Switzerland a couple of months ago had I been in Mexico when he was President, and I said, yeah.

He said, what were you doing? I said, well, I was working for Howard Hunt and the CIA. He said, what did you do? I said, I won't tell you. Now that was his country, and there's a sense in which he's probably annoyed, but of course everybody does it. Mexico has intelligence operatives in the United States. Mostly their mission is economic.

POVICH: You were then--you would then acquiesce if you were asked by the CIA or a government agency to do something?

BUCKLEY: If it didn't violate my conscience, yeah.

POVICH: For some reason, to me the mere fact that that agency would ask me to do something would shock me to the point of--I just don't want to get involved in any of your clandestine activities, whether they be for the good of the country or not.

BUCKLEY: Well, I think you're probably victimized by the--the CIA is unfashionable. The CIA is unfashionable because people think of the cold war--

POVICH: Could be unfathomable, too--

BUCKLEY: Well, I know. Maybe we know more about it than we ought to know, but the fact of the matter is that it is unfashionable, sort of non-chic right now. It used to be chic, interestingly enough. This simply is because there has been a total loss of any sense of spiritual mission in the world. This resulted from a collapse in Viet Nam, and from our failure to

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keep intact our values. The same kind of thing that happens in the United Nations. You simply lose any sense of the importance of human freedom. When we went over to Red China and came back and rejoiced over what Mao Tse-tung had done for the people of China, who aren't allowed to practice their religion or read a newspaper or watch television or join a labor union or leave the country or go to the city or go from the city-- when we rejoice over that, obviously we communicate, do we not, that those freedoms that the Central Intelligence Agency and indeed the American defense establishment is here to protect, aren't really all that important to us?

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