

ARTICLE APPLIED
ON PAGE 24TIME
23 February 1981

Press

The 2,300-Word *Times* Correction*A diplomat is cleared under curious circumstances*

For nearly seven years, Edward Korry, who was U.S. Ambassador to Chile when President Salvador Allende Gossens came to power in 1970, has insisted that he had nothing to do with secret CIA plans to overthrow the Marxist leader. But few believed him. A Senate Select Committee on Intelligence reported in 1975 that Korry had played a major role in the aborted coup; the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and other publications repeated the charge in numerous subsequent stories.* Korry's eight-year diplomatic career was ruined, and not until 1979 did he land his present job as visiting professor of international relations at Connecticut College.

Then last week, in an extraordinary front-page *mea culpa*, the *New York Times* set about refurbishing Korry's reputation. Headlined "New Evidence Backs Ex-Envoy on His Role in Chile," a 2,300-word article by former *Times* Investigative Ace Seymour Hersh, who still does occasional freelance pieces for the paper, reported that although attempts had been made by the CIA to engineer a military takeover in Chile, "none of this, it is now evident, was known to Ambassador Korry." What the *Times* failed to mention was that the writer who was clearing Korry's name was the man who had written some of the paper's most damaging stories about Korry—and that Korry was now one of Hersh's sources for a book he was doing on Henry Kissinger.

The *Times* article, surely the longest correction ever published in the prestigious paper, was commissioned by Executive Editor A.M. Rosenthal at Hersh's suggestion. Says Rosenthal: "Sy called me and said that he had come across new information that indicated that some of the things we had written about Korry were wrong. My God, if we were wrong in any way I would want to correct it. I asked him to write it for the *Times*." Rosenthal felt the *Times* had a particular responsibility to correct the record. Says he: "We had published [the Korry story] extensively and on the front page. There was no question that we should correct the record on the front page." Rosenthal apparently did not know that much of the evidence cited by Hersh

*TIME in its coverage of these events gave no great credence to the accusations against Korry, reporting that he was among the U.S. officials who had been accused of and had denied any part in anti-Allende activities, and noting that "they may not have known about the operations."



Korry in his office at Connecticut College

"Put it in writing. Tell Abe Rosenthal."

had been kicking around for years or that Hersh had been pressing Korry for help on his book.

While working at the *Times*, Pulitzer prizewinner Hersh had written numerous stories linking Korry with the Chilean debacle. In one article, he reported that Korry was about to be charged with contempt of Congress for misleading testimony before the Senate committee. Says Korry: "Hersh was the first reporter to stick it to me hard." Admits Hersh: "I led the way in trashing him." When Korry protested to Hersh and other reporters that some witnesses had lied to the Senate committee about his role, only one newsman, Joe Trento of the *Wilmington (Del.) News Journal*, investigated the case in detail. In 1976 Trento wrote that Korry had been victimized by other Government officials looking for a scapegoat, but the story was largely ignored by the *Times* and other major news organizations.

Not that Hersh had lost interest in the matter. Korry says the *Times* man approached him on several occasions, first in

1976, offering to report afresh the Chilean story if Korry would talk with him about secret intelligence activities. Korry says he refused as a matter of principle. Hersh heatedly denies that he tried to make such a deal, but concedes that he should have re-examined the Korry case sooner. Says he: "I thought he had withheld information from me when I needed it. I probably punished Korry—unconsciously anyway—for not telling me more."



Hersh in Washington, D.C.

Hersh called Korry again last November. Says the ex-diplomat: "He asked me to help him with his book. I blew up and asked, 'Why should I?' He mentioned that he now knew everything I had told him was true. I said, 'Put it in writing. Tell Abe Rosenthal.' I thought that a responsible editor of a responsible paper would want to correct the record." Rosenthal readily authorized the corrective story. Korry, in turn, says that he then provided the information for the Kissinger project that Hersh wanted. Says Korry: "I've always believed in justice. But there was misreporting by the *Times*, and certain people at the paper knew that." Korry says he is not bitter about the seven years "spent in a kind of isolation ward." As for the *Times's* belated effort to clear his name: "It's a start." ■

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