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# Helms Is Facing Inquiry on Chile And U.S. Spying

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 2 — The Federal Bureau of Investigation is seeking to determine whether Senator Jesse Helms or one of his aides passed sensitive American intelligence information to the Chilean Government, according to Congressional and Reagan Administration officials.

The officials said the inquiry was focusing on charges that the Chileans had been tipped off about a covert American intelligence-gathering operation.

They said the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence asked for the investigation after reviewing evidence from the State Department that there had been a leak of information to Chile, possibly by Senator Helms, a North Carolina Republican, or one of his staff members.

## Helms Denies Any Disclosure

Senator Helms, who is a vocal critic of the State Department's policy toward Chile, said today that neither he nor his staff had provided any classified material to the Chileans. He said he was not aware of the F.B.I.'s inquiries but said they appeared to have been politically motivated.

"The State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency are constantly trying to discredit me, and they're not going to be able to do it," Mr. Helms said in an interview. "The real need is for the State Department and the C.I.A. to clean up their acts."

"If they want to play the game of intimidation, of harassment and of leaks, we'll meet them right in the middle of the field," he said.

The allegation that Senator Helms or a staff member was involved could not

be independently verified. One Congressional official familiar with the evidence said it pointed to a "Helms connection" with the incident rather than to any specific person as the source of the unauthorized disclosure. The official added, however, that personal involvement of Senator Helms could not be ruled out.

A second Congressional official placed less weight on the information, saying it came from "third or fourth-hand" sources whose veracity had not yet been proved.

One Administration official said C.I.A. officials were angered by the disclosure to the Chileans because it posed a threat to the agency's sources and methods for gathering information on Chile. An intelligence source, characterizing the C.I.A.'s reaction to the incident, said: "This has really caused a problem. Whoever did this did an awful thing."

Kathy Pherson, a spokesman for the C.I.A., said the agency would have no comment.

## Senator Can Get Chile Data

The F.B.I. investigation began in the past week, according to an Administration official. Congressional sources, who asked not to be identified, said the Senate Intelligence Committee had informed the Senate's leadership of its decision to request the investigation.

Mr. Helms is not a member of the Intelligence Committee, but he is given sensitive intelligence on Chile in his post as chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee. He is the second-ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee.

In recent months, Mr. Helms has made a series of critical statements about the Administration's relationship with Chile, which he views as having one of the few anti-Communist governments in the region and thus deserving of strong American support.

## Ambassador Draws Helms Fire

Visiting Chile last month, Senator Helms assailed the American Ambassador, Harry G. Barnes, for his decision to attend the funeral of Rodrigo Rojas de Negri, a 19-year-old permanent resident of the United States who was fatally burned in anti-Government protests. Witnesses said Mr. Rojas and an 18-year-old student had been doused with flammable liquid and set afire by men in military uniforms. The army denied responsibility.

On arriving in Santiago, the Chilean capital, Mr. Helms criticized the State Department for pressuring Chile to restore democracy and investigate Mr. Rojas's death. He said Mr. Barnes had "planted the American flag in the midst of a Communist activity" by going to the funeral.

State Department officials and White House officials defended Mr. Barnes, saying his attendance at the funeral was approved in advance. They also said Senator Helms had been wrong to make his comments while in a foreign country.

## A Senate Prohibition

In the interview today, Senator Helms questioned the motivations of the officials who disclosed the investigation of him or his staff. "What I say about the C.I.A. and the State Department, I say publicly, while they dodge around in dark corners and leak to The New York Times," he said.

The investigation of disclosure of intelligence information relating to Chile was initiated under a Senate rule that bars staff and members from releasing classified information or material provided in closed sessions of Congress or its committees. Under Senate Resolution 400, committees informed of possible violations can refer cases to the Justice Department for investigation and a report. Congressional officials said investigations under the rule are infrequent.

In the executive branch, a similar procedure is followed for investigations of unauthorized disclosures. Agencies refer cases to the Justice Department, which in turn decides whether further investigation is warranted.

## Administration and Disclosure

The Intelligence Committee's decision to refer the case to the Justice Department came after several months in which committee members sharply criticized Administration officials for unauthorized disclosure of intelligence information.

For instance, at the confirmation hearing on the nomination of Robert Gates as Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, Senator Sam Nunn, Democrat of Georgia, said:

"I think somebody at the highest levels of Government has got to get this under control. When you start reading things that lead directly, or could hypothetically at least, to sources and methods of a sensitive nature, I think it is deplorable."

Alluding to disclosure of intelligence data on Libya, Senator Nunn added: "We hear so much about Congress leaking, but, to the best of my information, Congress hasn't even been briefed in these areas, which means these leaks are definitely coming from the executive branch. And I think it is going to cause a lot more difficulty over the next few months."