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CIA reportedly got OK for Allende slaying

BOSTON (UPI) — Former President Richard Nixon and his secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, gave the CIA "a blank check" to arrange the assassination of President Salvador Allende of Chile in 1970, it was reported yesterday.

CIA Director Richard Helms was approached by both men and Nixon gave him a "blank check to move against Allende without informing anyone," according to an article in the December issue of Atlantic Monthly magazine.

The Chilean president was killed in a coup three years later but there was no known evidence of CIA involvement. The Atlantic Monthly article is an excerpt of Seymour M. Hersh's book, "The Price of Power: Kissinger in Nixon's White House."

Helms told the Senate Intelligence Committee in 1975 he did not consider

assassination to have been included in Nixon's authorization to move against the Chilean president but the former CIA director reportedly told a different story to a "close associate" reached by Hersh.

"In a later conversation . . . Helms provided a much more credible description of what took place on Sept. 15: Nixon had specifically ordered the CIA to get rid of Allende," Hersh wrote.

"Helms told the associate that there was no doubt in his mind at the time what Nixon meant."

Helms was pressured again on the subject at least one time by Kissinger, the article said.

The Intelligence Committee reported Nixon authorized the CIA to stage a military coup if possible to prevent Allende's election in October 1970 but also said it could find no

evidence of American-backed assassination plotting.

Hersh said he also interviewed CIA agents who took part in an intensive anti-Allende campaign in late 1970 and obtained highly classified CIA files not turned over to the Senate Intelligence Committee.

He reported Yeoman Charles E. Radford, who handled documents in a National Security Council office, was shocked to discover in 1970 a White House paper proposing different ways to kill Allende.

The article said Helms ordered four veteran CIA agents into Chile between Sept. 15 and Oct. 24, 1970, the day the Chilean Congress confirmed Allende's election.

The agents, known as "false-flaggers," were to contact members of the Chilean military known to be eager to stage a coup, the article said.