

Page Denied

The Cloud Over Jesse Helms

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Hours after the C.I.A. gave a briefing on Chile to a member of the staff of Senator Jesse Helms, Chile's military rulers learned that United States intelligence had confidential information about the violent death last month of an American teen-ager during a demonstration in Santiago. So, at least, runs the complaint of the State Department.

That does not necessarily mean Senator Helms leaks national security information to foreign governments. The State Department, engaged in a running feud with the Senator, is likely to see anything he does in the worst light. But even in the best light, these are serious charges. The Senate Intelligence Committee has asked for a Justice Department investigation and the F.B.I. is on the case.

Senator Helms, chairman of a Latin America subcommittee, charges that he is the victim of a sneak attack by Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams. "They're trying to silence me," he protested the other day. Mr. Abrams denies accusing Senator Helms or any staff member. He says his interest is in plugging an obvious intelligence leak. The Intelligence Committee's Republican chairman, David Durenberger, and Democratic vice chairman, Patrick Leahy, agree that the evident security breach warrants investigation.

The State Department arranged for the C.I.A. briefing as a way of persuading Senator Helms to give up his ugly interference with the Administration's work in Chile. To its credit, Washington has been working to curb human rights abuses. The latest is the death by burning of the young visitor, apparently at the hands of Chilean soldiers.

Ambassador Harry Barnes commendably showed Washington's concern by attending the youth's funeral. Senator Helms, who admires Gen. Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship for its anti-Communism, was in Santiago at the time. He upbraided Ambassador Barnes for "planting the American flag in the midst of Communist activity." With or without the briefing, Senator Helms continues to assert that the youth set himself afire.

Meanwhile, a valuable source may have been compromised. The source apparently enabled State to learn that the military itself doubted the official version of the burning. Losing that source isn't like losing a code book but it's costly nonetheless. It should not take the investigators long to track down this leak. Senator Helms, who would be outraged if, say, Nicaragua were the beneficiary of leaked intelligence, should be leading the investigators, not protesting the investigation.

Helms Assails Many Over Chile

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By STEVEN V. ROBERTS
Special to The New York Times

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WASHINGTON, August 7 — Senator Jesse Helms said tonight that the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency and the news media were all combining to produce a "massive campaign of disinformation" about the situation in Chile under the military regime of Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

In a speech prepared for delivery on the Senate floor, the North Carolina Republican said: "What disturbs me about the disinformation campaign is the readiness of the State Department, the C.I.A. and the media to side with the Marxists and the totalitarians. There is no lie too improbable, no distortion too great, no smear campaign too dirty for the State Department and the media to embrace."

Mr. Helms and several of his aides were being investigated by the Justice Department for the possible disclosure of sensitive intelligence information to the Government of Chile.

The investigation has centered on Christopher Manion, a Helms aide, who received a top-secret briefing about Chile in mid-July, according to Senate sources. Within 24 hours, information from that briefing, which detailed United States intelligence operations in Chile, was received in Santiago, and the intelligence operation was compromised, the sources said.

The investigators are still examining whether Senator Helms himself, or several other aides, might have received the critical information from Mr. Manion and then transmitted it to Chile, the Senate sources said.

A Long-Running Dispute

Mr. Helms, who has engaged in a long-running dispute with the State Department, has denied that he, or anyone on his staff, conveyed the informa-

tion to Chilean officials.

In his 20-page speech, Mr. Helms said that Harry Barnes, the United States Ambassador to Chile, is trying to "disrupt the orderly transition" to democracy in Chile. The Senator cited, as he has in the past, Mr. Barnes's presence at the funeral of a young man killed in an anti-Government demonstration.

"The policy of President Reagan is to promote the democratic transition on an orderly schedule," Mr. Helms said. "The policy of Ambassador Barnes is to disrupt the orderly transition, to promote the totalitarian left that Chile once threw off just in the nick of time, and to defame the government that rescued Chile from the clutches of international socialism."

Mr. Helms said that Mr. Barnes and Elliott Abrams, the assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, were both trying to "spread the myth" that human rights is a "major problem" in Chile. The Senator argued that violations of human rights were necessitated by the fact that Chile is "besieged by terrorist revolutionaries seeking to destroy freedom."

Earlier this week, Senator Helms accused Mr. Abrams of being the source of the charge that he had disclosed confidential information. The State Department said it was not seeking an investigation of Mr. Helms.

Helms charges CIA, State

trying to destabilize Chile

WASH TIMES

By Bill Gertz
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

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Sen. Jesse Helms yesterday renewed his attacks on the State Department and CIA, charging both agencies with waging a "massive campaign of disinformation" to destabilize Chile.

"What disturbs me about the disinformation campaign is the readiness of the State Department, the CIA and the media to side with the Marxists and the totalitarians," the North Carolina Republican said in a prepared speech for delivery in the Senate. "There is no lie too im-

probable, no distortion too great, no smear campaign too dirty for the State Department and the media to embrace."

Earlier this week, Mr. Helms charged that Elliott Abrams, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, was behind a request by the Senate Intelligence Committee that the FBI probe the leak of classified information about U.S. intelligence-gathering to the Chilean government.

A staffer on Mr. Helms' Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee, Chris Manion, and an unidentified member of Mr. Helms' staff are sus-

pects in the investigation, congressional sources said yesterday.

"I am deeply concerned about the massive campaign of disinformation which is being coordinated against the people of Chile, who yearn for an orderly transition to democracy," Mr. Helms said. "A coalition of the media, the Marxists and the State Department is seeking to destabilize the transition to full-fledged democracy in Chile."

State Department spokesman Greg Lagana dismissed Mr. Helms' charges as false.

"Our policy is to support a transition to democracy, but obviously the

Chileans have to find a way to work that out," Mr. Lagana said in an interview.

He said the State Department opposes all groups, Marxist or other, that advocate violent change.

"The charge that we are somehow supporting communism is just not true — there's nothing to support it," he said. "We have condemned those groups that wouldn't renounce violence, specifically groups on the left that wouldn't renounce violence. Far from supporting the communists, we believe strongly that forswearing violence is a sine qua non for democracy."

In the 20-page speech, Mr. Helms said the Chilean people desire a "fully functioning representative democracy," one that will not "slide back into a totalitarian regime such as they experienced under Allende."

Mr. Helms said that a Chilean research center found that only 2 percent of the Chilean people felt human rights "was a major problem."

He said that Harry Barnes, the U.S. ambassador to Chile, and Mr. Abrams "are trying to cater to that 2 percent with their support of the violent communist left — at the expense of the democratic opposition and the parties that support President Pinochet."

Mr. Helms criticized Mr. Barnes for attending a July funeral of Rodrigo Rojas, a 19-year-old Chilean-born U.S. resident who died of burns suffered during anti-government protests.

"The policy of President Reagan is to promote the democratic transition on an orderly schedule," Mr. Helms said. "The policy of Ambassador Barnes is to disrupt the orderly transition, to promote the totalitarian left that Chileans once threw off just in the nick of time, and to defame the government that rescued Chile from the clutches of international socialism."

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