

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

NLF MR Case No

7319-x  
5A  
09-01

CONFIDENTIAL

Document No

12

November 5, 1975

Dear Mitch:

Attached are the NSC Staff comments on the Senate Select Committee's draft "Covert Action in Chile, 1963-1973."

The fundamental point to be made from our perspective is that a public statement confirming not only the "fact of" but specifics of past covert actions will have a terribly damaging impact on: our position of leadership in the international community; our position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and other adversaries; and our ability to preserve intelligence relationships with many countries. These matters may be considered in Executive session, and, if need be, legislation proposed based upon these hearings.

As a practical matter, we recognize the difficulty of publishing a report of substance without citing examples from which to draw conclusions. The alternative to a report of substance could be a statement of general findings, conclusions and recommendations, along with a classified annex, suitably sanitized, to support these findings. I think the attached comments support the necessity for avoiding public disclosure of the type and scope of our activities in Chile and the concomitant danger of placing at hostage the success of future covert activities.

In short, we support a strong objection, on principle, to any unclassified publication of this material.

Sincerely,



Robert C. McFarlane  
Lt. Colonel, U.S.M.C.

Military Assistant to the Assistant  
to the President for National  
Security Affairs

Withheld under statutory authority of the  
Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949 (50  
U.S.C., section 403g)

Central Intelligence Agency

~~SECRET ATTACHMENTS~~

DECLASSIFIED UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE INTERAGENCY  
SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL.

E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)

ISCAP No. 2010-009, document 12

Photo Copy  
from  
Gerald R. Ford Library

~~SECRET~~

5B

Comments on Senate Select Committee Report on Chile

We have reviewed the Church Committee Staff Report on Covert Action in Chile 1963-1973 and concur most strongly in the CIA position that this material should not be published and should not be discussed in public session.

In general, the report is markedly one-sided. It refers to "massive" involvement, but as compared to what? It makes it appear that only the United States was involved in this activity, and makes no attempt to correlate our activity with that of Cuba and the Soviet Union on the other side. It also infers from the documentation that has been provided the Committee that there was direct U.S. involvement in the coup and the death of General Rene Schneider, which was not the case.

In addition, we recognize the legitimacy of a debate on whether or not the United States should conduct covert activity at all or whether we should have done so in Chile. However, such a debate cannot take place in public without, in effect, prejudging the issue. Such public debate would provide our potential adversaries with sufficient material (as well as frighten off any potential collaborators) to destroy for all practical purposes any U.S. capability to conduct covert operations, even if it should be decided such operations were in the U.S. interest.

Also, how can they equate this study with the legal requirement of the Director of Central Intelligence to protect intelligence sources and methods? The Committee study clearly says it is describing CIA methods -- it uses that label. It also exposes individuals and groups. On IV-18 it describes [redacted] in some detail and if one misses the correct identification, well, more details are offered on page [redacted] -- and while the study notes that "Unconfirmed charges of CIA involvement were made," the study proposes to correct that by confirming that CIA was indeed involved.

Why is it necessary to name names? The story could be told in generalities -- a large newspaper, a major political party, a political splinter group, etc. But throughout the paper names are named. In fact, sometimes specific individual agents may be

~~SECRET~~

Photo Copy  
from  
Gerald R. Ford Library

E.O. 13526, section 3.3(b)(1)

E.O. 13526, section 3.3(b)(1)

identified -- e.g., IV, 7--"a Radical journalist [redacted] who joined with others who are identified on 2 June to organize the Legion of Liberty;

E.O. 13526, section 3.3(b)(1)

Specific individuals who took risks to collaborate with us in clandestine endeavors which our policy makers deemed were in our national interests are to be subject to public exposure and worse. It is not cloak-and-daggerish to suggest that some lives could be in jeopardy.

And what about the impact on our efforts elsewhere in the world? Can we expect to attract the collaborators we need to conduct clandestine operations if they see that their names and roles may be publicized by the Congress? And what about other places where leaders are looking for "paper tigers" to bash around and use this material to claim that a newspaper in their country (or a rival politician--Australia today, for example--or military group, etc.) is "obviously" being supported by CIA because here is an official document of the Congress which describes this as one of CIA's methods.

On page V-2, the study philosophically notes the fact "That the United States was involved has been taken for granted in Latin America for many years." Again, it proposes to remove all doubts by offering confirming evidence, naming names, telling who got the money and how much!

E.O. 13526, section 3.3(b)(1)

On page V-4 it throws some tar [redacted] but notes on page V-6 that CIA faces a difficult situation in talking about relations with multinational corporations for fear it "may reveal sensitive sources and methods."

E.O. 13526, section 3.3(b)(1)

[redacted] Exposure could ruin careers, destroy the economic well-being, or worse, of many individuals. And the fact remains, that in spite of charges that CIA

E.O. 13526, section 3.3(b)(1)

The DCI says this material remains classified. To give it public exposure could endanger the lives of individuals who cooperated with us, affect our foreign relations not only with Chile but with other nations, and would be a serious and harmful blow to future clandestine and covert action operations of our government.

We have marked in red the various identifications which we believe should be protected. Stating this information in generalities would not detract from the conclusions of the study or its purpose of analyzing the system. There would still be sufficient details to support the conclusions.

If we are going to fight against release of classified information which would damage our foreign policy and national security interests, this is the time.

~~SECRET~~

60

Comments on Senate Select Committee Report on Chile

We have reviewed the Church Committee Staff Report on Covert Action in Chile 1963-1973 and concur most strongly in the CIA position that this material should not be published and should not be discussed in public session.

In general, the report is markedly one-sided. It refers to "massive" involvement, but as compared to what? It makes it appear that only the United States was involved in this activity, and makes no attempt to correlate our activity with that of Cuba and the Soviet Union on the other side. It also infers from the documentation that has been provided the Committee that there was direct U.S. involvement in the coup and the death of General Rene Schneider, which was not the case.

In addition, we recognize the legitimacy of a debate on whether or not the United States should conduct covert activity at all or whether we should have done so in Chile. However, such a debate cannot take place in public without, in effect, prejudging the issue. Such public debate would provide our potential adversaries with sufficient material (as well as frighten off any potential collaborators) to destroy for all practical purposes any U.S. capability to conduct covert operations, even if it should be decided such operations were in the U.S. interest.

E.O. 13526, section 3.3(b)(1)

Also, how can they equate this study with the legal requirement of the Director of Central Intelligence to protect intelligence sources and methods? The Committee study clearly says it is describing CIA methods -- it uses that label. It also exposes individuals and groups. On IV-18 it describes [redacted] in some detail and if one misses the correct identification, well, more details are offered on page [redacted] -- and while the study notes that "Unconfirmed charges of CIA involvement were made," the study proposes to correct that by confirming that CIA was indeed involved.

Why is it necessary to name names? The story could be told in generalities -- a large newspaper, a major political party, a political splinter group, etc. But throughout the paper names are named. In fact, sometimes specific individual agents may be

~~SECRET~~

Photo Copy  
from  
Gerald R. Ford Library

E.O. 13526, section 3.3(b)(1)

identified -- e.g., IV, 7--"a Radical journalist [redacted] who joined with others who are identified on 2 June to organize the Legion of Liberty;

E.O. 13526, section 3.3(b)(1)

Specific individuals who took risks to collaborate with us in clandestine endeavors which our policy makers deemed were in our national interests are to be subject to public exposure and worse. It is not cloak-and-daggerish to suggest that some lives could be in jeopardy.

And what about the impact on our efforts elsewhere in the world? Can we expect to attract the collaborators we need to conduct clandestine operations if they see that their names and roles may be publicized by the Congress? And what about other places where leaders are looking for "paper tigers" to bash around and use this material to claim that a newspaper in their country (or a rival politician--Australia today, for example--or military group, etc.) is "obviously" being supported by CIA because here is an official document of the Congress which describes this as one of CIA's methods.

On page V-2, the study philosophically notes the fact "That the United States was involved has been taken for granted in Latin America for many years." Again, it proposes to remove all doubts by offering confirming evidence, naming names, telling who got the money and how much!

E.O. 13526, section 3.3(b)(1)

On page V-4 it throws some tar [redacted] but notes on page V-6 that CIA faces a difficult situation in talking about relations with multinational corporations for fear it "may reveal sensitive sources and methods."

E.O. 13526, section 3.3(b)(1)

Exposure could ruin careers, destroy the economic well being, or worse, of many individuals. And the fact remains, that in spite of charges that CIA

E.O. 13526, section 3.3(b)(1)

The DCI says this material remains classified. To give it public exposure could endanger the lives of individuals who cooperated with us, affect our foreign relations not only with Chile but with other nations, and would be a serious and harmful blow to future clandestine and covert action operations of our government.

We have marked in red the various identifications which we believe should be protected. Stating this information in generalities would not detract from the conclusions of the study or its purpose of analyzing the system. There would still be sufficient details to support the conclusions.

If we are going to fight against release of classified information which would damage our foreign policy and national security interests, this is the time.