

DRAFT
MR 11/7

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

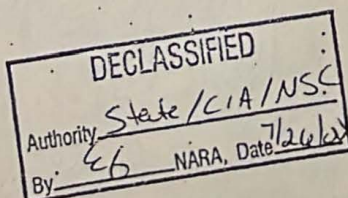
SUBJECT: Public Disclosure of Covert Action by the
Senate Select Committee

A major area of investigation by the Senate Select Committee has been covert action. The Committee's staff has engaged in an extensive examination of Agency files with respect to covert action in general and five specific examples in particular: [REDACTED] and Chile. Your decision not to permit CIA officers or former officers to participate in public hearings regarding Chile has been communicated to the Committee. It remains the Committee's intention, however, to hold a public hearing on the range of U.S. covert activities in Chile. In addition, the Committee intends to publish an extensive report on such activities.

The term covert action has been used by the CIA to mean any clandestine operation or activity designed to influence foreign governments, organizations, persons or events in support of U.S. foreign policy. Historically, our Government has declined to acknowledge officially such activities even though their existence has been known

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publicly because official acknowledgement: (1) could damage seriously the governments, individuals or groups with whom we worked, (2) has the effect of forcing reaction from other countries involved; (3) could have damaging impact on our position of leadership in the international community; and, (4) could lead other countries, organizations or individuals with whom we might wish to conduct such operations in the future to doubt our willingness or ability to protect them.

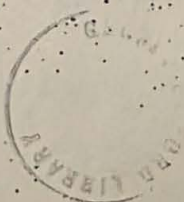
If it is decided to maintain the historical position of not officially acknowledging covert actions, it can be contemplated that the Committee will hold its public hearings with either non-government or Committee staff investigators as witnesses. In addition, it can be expected that the Committee's Chile report will be published in the face of strong protestations by the Executive Branch.

Possible Compromise Position

At an informal dinner hosted by the DCI on November 5, at which Senators Church and Mathias were in attendance, a possible compromise was discussed. It would call for:

1. CIA to work with the Committee staff to delete from the proposed report specifics concerning Agency employees, U.S. Government officials, foreign officials and organizations;

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2. a preface to the report indicating the unique nature of the revelation regarding covert activities;
3. a statement indicating that the information contained in the report came from many sources;
4. a commitment from the Committee that no other covert action would be made the subject of a public hearing or public report; and,
5. the structuring of the public hearing so that no present or former U.S. officials are asked to appear as witnesses. The Committee would also minimize the appearance that the Executive Branch willingly divulged the circumstances surrounding the covert actions.

In using Chile as the case study, the proposed compromise limits the exposure of covert action to one country. It is our understanding that the assassination report details extensive covert action in Chile over the same ten year period. Consequently, any public hearings or report on Chile will in part duplicate that which the Committee contemplates making public in the assassination report.

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