

NATIONAL REVIEW

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Capitol Issues

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Spring in Their Steps

THE DAY Senator Edward Kennedy announced his "firm, final, and unconditional" decision not to seek the Presidency in 1976, a newsman asked Mr. Ford if he had a comment on the Senator's announcement. Mr. Ford said nothing. He shook his head. Then he smiled broadly. In 25 months we will know at least a little more about whether Mr. Ford's political judgment was sound when he evidently decided, smiling, that he will be better off running against someone other than Mr. Kennedy. But at this point—two years from the election, which is an eternity in American politics these days—it doesn't make much sense to worry about who the Democrats will cough up as a candidate. The important point today, as usual, is that candidates rarely win the Presidency; other candidates lose it.

Americans vote against. And there may be plenty of things about Mr. Ford that people will want to vote against in 1976. Mr. Ford's performance in the two weeks that began with his pardon for Mr. Nixon caused serious concern among his many supporters in this town, and put a spring in the step of the many Democratic presidential candidates.

Obviously the pardon, whatever else you may say about it, was ill-timed. Some of Mr. Ford's senior aides are letting reporter friends know that they thought so from the start. (President Kennedy acquainted the nation with this nice axiom: "Success has a thousand fathers, but failure is an orphan." He said that after the Bay of Pigs adventure had marred his Administration's first months. He was aware that some members of his Administration were telling friendly reporters that they had really opposed the Cuban invasion.) Mr. Ford knows he has had his Bay of Pigs. At his most recent press conference he admitted that he was startled

by the intensity of the public reaction against his pardon decision. (This admission was to his credit, and it was startling, given the unwillingness of recent Presidents to admit that there is anything in the world that catches them by surprise. Speaking of splendidly startling candor, the White House, when asked, acknowledged, without beating around the bush, that the telephone calls, telegrams, and letters were running heavily against Mr. Ford's decision. The previous White House would have lied about it, or would have illegally used leftover campaign funds to finance an avalanche of phony telegrams and newspaper ads supporting the decision. The more things change, the more they do not remain the same.) It is now clear (actually, it was clear even before Mr. Ford acted) that the American people wanted to make a sensible distinction between prosecution and punishment. They favored the former, opposed the latter. But they would have gone along with anything Mr. Ford wanted to do if he had just prepared the ground a bit before he went ahead.

Instead, two weeks before what he did, he seemed to tell a press conference that he would not do it. This raised dark suspicions about a deal having been struck with Mr. Nixon. I do not credit those rumors. I believe Mr. Ford acted impulsively, with compassion but without good judgment, to do what his conscience told him to do. But Mr. Ford is not paid to see that his conscience is faithfully executed. And his judgment, including his political judgment, is the big question mark troubling the nation as it watches its first selected, not elected, President.

AND THEN came those remarks about Chile, and the CIA's covert operations therein. The remarks came at a press conference called to allow Mr. Ford to comment on the pardon decision. The press conference certainly helped eclipse the pardon controversy. Mr. Ford needlessly did with the question of Chile what he did with the matter of Rhodesian chrome: he put himself squarely in the middle of a hot dispute. If Mr. Ford felt that, as President, he could

not support, as he did when in Congress, opposition to the UN sanctions against importation of Rhodesian chrome, he at least could have bucked the matter over to the State Department, which would have taken the heat. Similarly, once the report about CIA involvement in Chile leaked to the press, Mr. Ford could have just said that the whole matter was the business of the last Administration, and he would "study" the general subject, etc. Instead, he gave a flawed description of what the CIA did in Chile, and wrapped himself in the principle that covert operations are a distasteful necessity in this troubled world, etc. That principle may be sound, but, now that it has been given a presidential pat on the head, it will be the subject of a noisy Senate examination. So brace yourself for a wallow in Chilegate.

WHEN the Chile story began to break, it became apparent that those who are going to be most unhappy about it—e.g., the liberal senators on the Foreign Relations Committee and kindred spirits in the intelligentsia—would be the persons who have provided the most adoring and uncritical support for Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's vision of detente with the Soviet Union. Mr. Kissinger's position has become increasingly uncomfortable during the last 12 months, what with the Mideast war, the general ugliness of the Soviet government's deeds at home and abroad, and all that disagreeable talk about Mr. Kissinger's having some disreputable connection with the wire-tapping of his friends and staff. Now comes word that he had some connection with the CIA's Chilean enterprises. And with it comes more of what Mr. Kissinger will not sit still for—criticism. So, suddenly, Mr. Ford is at the UN, departing from his text and the subject (the world food shortage) to announce his unswerving devotion to Mr. Kissinger. As he spoke the soothing words, the television cameras swung to Mr. Kissinger, who looked as content as you, too, would look if you could receive, on demand, such endorsement from the President of the United States. As for the President, he just looked easily put upon. □

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The Chile Connection

The current flap in this country over CIA operations in Chile is not an isolated incident. In global perspective, it appears, rather, as the U.S. contribution to an international pageant coinciding with the first anniversary of the overthrow of the Allende government by the military Junta.

The Left had a big stake in Allende. Chile's Communist Party was the largest in Latin America, and has always remained faithful to the Kremlin. For the Soviet Union and for the Chilean Party, the Allende regime promised to be the highroad to the first Communist state on the Latin American continent. The non-Communist Left was no less closely involved with Allende, though as usual it saw Chile through its rose-tinted glasses. Allende was going to show the world how to achieve "democratic socialism" peacefully. The Junta's takeover thus struck a devastating blow at the strategy of the Communists and at the illusions of the non-Communist Left. Both, ever since, have been trying to re-form and counterattack.

In Europe the Left's propaganda and mass actions on the Chile issue have been more conspicuous than in this country. There are all sorts of committees to save the victims of the Junta, restore democracy to Chile, help the Chilean refugees, and so on. In the U.S. as well as in Europe, there has been an enormous quantity of articles, columns, and editorials expended on the crimes of the Junta and the virtues of Allende. On the September 15 anniversary, 10,000 leftists gathered in London's Trafalgar Square to denounce the Junta and the U.S. as its Svengali, and many thousands marched and made speeches in the other European capitals. And at just about the same time, Representative Michael Harrington leaked the secret Colby testimony about the CIA in Chile, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* published it for the world audience, the U.S. Congress developed an attack of hysteria on the subject, and the UN critics and enemies of the U.S. prepared to make the General Assembly resound with Chilean echoes.

What is going on, thus, is a powerful global political

warfare campaign, directed nominally against the Chilean Junta but basically against the U.S., in which Moscow, the Communist parties, and some sections of the Left are conscious participants, and the rest of the Left, many liberals, much of the media, and too many members of Congress are sincere or opportunistic dupes.

We do not mean to suggest that there are not serious issues involved in this dispute, concerning which intelligent Americans can have honest and objective differences of opinion. There are many such: Can and should a democracy conduct secret operations? Is the CIA the right sort of agency to conduct them? *Can* operations be kept secret in a democracy? Granted the propriety of secret operations in the abstract, were those conducted in Chile justified? How can a democratic society supervise secret operations without blowing them? We have discussed these questions in the past and shall often return to them. But in this world we live in, it is always also prudent to note who is doing what to whom.

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■ Forced by the simultaneously posed issues of detente and Chile, Secretary of State Kissinger has painted himself into something of a contradiction, and will have to squirm a little to make a convincing exit. On the one hand he upholds our intervention, through CIA operations, in Chile's internal affairs. On the other, he argues, in defense of going ahead now with detente, that it would be improper for us to attempt to meddle in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union. Why the double standard? Because the Allende government was worse than the Soviet government? Because it was more of a threat to us? Because destabilizing the Allende government was "in the best interest of the people of Chile" (as the President put it in his press conference), whereas destabilizing the Soviet government would not be in the best interest of the people of the Soviet Union? Or maybe because Chile is sufficiently weak for us to get away with interference and the Soviet Union too strong for us to meddle with? None of the alternatives is very satisfactory.

■ When quote nonconformist painters set up an unauthorized art show on the sidewalks of Moscow last week, cultural integrity was preserved at the last moment by quote vigilantes armed, ever so conveniently, with bulldozers and firehoses, who routed the artists. Five of the painters were fined and put in the workhouse until, uh, unfortunate publicity in the foreign press effected their release. Some light on this seeming overreaction to sidewalk art was shed by fellow vigilante and art critic Gus Hall, who says: "One would have to be totally naive not to see the fine hand of the CIA in this affair."

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■ Watergate burglar E. Howard Hunt in his memoirs, says that Mr. Nixon's lawyers invited him to the White House last spring to chat about Mr. Nixon's defense. One of Mr. Nixon's lawyers at the time, J. Fred Buzhardt, says "we were trying to ascertain some facts that were in doubt." Hunt says the invitation was "outrageously inappropriate."

■ The Senate Special Committee on National Emergencies has concluded that many of the most significant decisions of the last three Presidents have been withheld from Congress and the public. While presidential "proclamations" and "executive orders" must be published in the *Federal Register*, the law has been evaded by calling the measures by some other name, e.g., Kennedy's and Johnson's "national security memoranda" and Nixon's "national security directives." At last, Nixon is no longer the only object of the Senate's Watergate-inspired interest in excessive presidential power.

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