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# CAMPAIGN OF CUNNING

## THE INSIDE STORY OF ALEXANDER HAIG'S RISE TO POWER

*from a post inside the national security council, the author watched haig mount the pivotal campaign of his life—an assault on the soul of a tragically insecure president*

article **By ROGER MORRIS**

IT BEGAN almost quietly. Early in December 1968, at his transition headquarters in New York's Hotel Pierre, on Fifth Avenue facing Central Park, President-elect Richard Nixon introduced to the press his choice as National Security Advisor, an unfamiliar Harvard professor named Henry Kissinger. Typically, it began, too, with a little deceit on a matter that would prove monumental. Having vouchsafed beforehand to a gratified Kissinger that they would "run foreign policy from the White House," Nixon proceeded to announce to the reporters that his new assistant would confine himself to planning and leave diplomacy to a "strong Secretary of State" about to be named. Out of "eagerness to deflect any possible criticism," Nixon's public pretense was "substantially at variance" with their private intention, as Kissinger later delicately described it in his memoirs. It was also an omen of much more such variance to come.

*From the Pierre, Nixon and Kissinger fastened their absolute control over the governance of the country's international relations. They fashioned and implanted a new circuitry of decision making in which all the impulses of foreign policy fused in the White House, shorting out the bureaucracy and the Cabinet secretaries. Yet in the hotel that December, a time Kissinger remembered as a "moment of charmed innocence," those fateful consequences were scarcely apparent. It was an unlikely dyarchy, the German-born academic strategist with a fondness for great power concerts and the California politician of native suspicion, bigotry and home-grown anticommunism. Least of all was there any foreshadow that their historic collaboration would produce one more figure—a third man, who, raised in the strange inner ferment of their regime, would eventually succeed to Kissinger's place and pretend to Nixon's. Like the seizure of power at the Pierre, the extraordinary rise of Alexander Haig from 1969 to 1973 happened largely out of sight.*

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Of the Nixon Administration policies in which his role was later questioned, none would be more charged for Haig than the covert U.S. intervention in Chile. Coming in the wake of the wire taps and the Cambodian invasion, the Chilean episode in the autumn of 1970 possessed all the elements to excite its eventual 1975 Senatorial investigation and revelation: corporate bribery and scheming, White House intrigues, military conspirators, CIA agents passing money and guns at some predawn rendezvous and, in the end, torture, tyranny and assassination.

One of the few Latin nations with a firm tradition of nonmilitary democratic rule, Chile also had a history of regular CIA intervention. The Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson Administrations all spent covert money to back pro-U.S. candidates, including \$3,000,000 in propaganda and various secret subsidies in 1964 to ensure the defeat of Salvador Allende, the avowedly Marxist presidential candidate of a loose Socialist/Communist/moderate coalition. In the 1970 election, however, Allende's Christian Democratic and rightist opposition was splintered and leaderless, and his victory seemed likely. Precisely what danger an Allende regime represented to Washington was one of the tragic puzzles left when it was all over.

In any case, Allende's prospective triumph at the polls rang alarm bells throughout the Administration's covert precincts early in 1970. The highly secret 40 Committee—a sub-Cabinet body chaired by Kissinger, staffed by Haig and responsible for overseeing clandestine operations—voted on March 25 to spend \$135,000 on a "spoiling" operation against Allende in the September Chilean election. That sum was supplemented by International Telephone and Telegraph's \$350,000 payment to stave off nationalization of its lucrative holdings in Chile. Meeting again on June 27, the committee voted to increase the anti-Allende campaign fund to \$300,000 and discussed bribing the Chilean congress in its final presidential certifying vote in October should Allende win the popular election. When Allende won in a free election on September fourth, the committee allocated \$250,000 to bribe members of the Chilean congress. It also launched still more covert actions prior to the October 24 congressional vote to prevent Allende's assumption of power "through either political or military means."