

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 18

BOSTON GLOBE  
26 NOVEMBER 1982

## Crimes against democracy . . .

The Atlantic Monthly for December has published a powerful piece of investigative reporting that should be required reading for any American who cares about the fragility of democratic government. In an excerpt from his forthcoming book on Henry Kissinger, former New York Times reporter Seymour Hersh tenaciously reconstructs the shameful history of American crimes against democracy in Chile.

The Hersh article has already produced headlines for its disclosure of a Nixon Administration plan to assassinate Salvador Allende, the democratically elected Socialist president of Chile from 1970 until his assassination during the military putsch of September 11, 1973. But the disgraceful story told to Hersh by former government officials, diplomats and covert operatives reveals a pattern of behavior far more sinister than any single contingency plan for assassinating a foreign leader.

Hersh and his sources show that the American government used bribery, sabotage and murder in an effort to thwart the verdict of Chilean voters when they elected Allende president, and after Nixon and Kissinger had failed to prevent Allende from coming to power they spent tens of millions of dollars to subvert his government, ruthlessly cutting off aid and credits, intervening within Chile to "make the economy scream" - a phrase that CIA director Richard Helms used in notes of a conversation with Nixon - and finally preparing the way for a fascist military dictatorship.

It is to Hersh's credit that he goes beyond the circumscribed investigative task of simply collecting testimony to ask a crucial analytical

question. Hersh asks why such Mafia methods were authorized by Nixon and Kissinger. The frightening answer is that Kissinger and his President were presiding over a government of, by and for powerful corporate interests.

Hersh cites a deep-cover CIA agent who returned to duty for one last mission out of sheer patriotism, "told colleagues that it was corporate security and not national security that was involved in the anti-Allende operation."

In support of this distinction, Hersh also quotes an intelligence memorandum from CIA to the White House affirming that the United States "had no vital interests within Chile, the world military balance of power would not be significantly altered by an Allende regime, and an Allende victory in Chile would not pose any likely threat to the peace of the region."

The historical truths Hersh has exhumed are relevant today not merely because figures from the Nixon era such as Caspar Weinberger, George Bush, George Shultz and Alexander Haig have shaped the policies of the Reagan Administration, but rather because the policies themselves, especially in Latin America, seem to be recapitulating the methods and objectives of the "aberrant" Nixon epoch.

Beyond the moral taint of an interventionist policy based on Mafia methods, there is an inherent domestic danger in America's promoting of fascist dictatorships such as that of Augusto Pinochet in Chile. The ultimate danger is that those who regard the Pinochet regime as a necessary requirement for security abroad may one day be persuaded that some Yanqui variety of that polity is equally necessary back home.