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# 'Not a Nut or a Bolt'

By Anthony Lewis

WASHINGTON—On Sept. 18, 1970, President Nixon met in the White House with John Mitchell, Attorney General; Richard Helms, director of Central Intelligence, and Henry Kissinger, assistant for national security affairs. Nixon ordered the C.I.A. to help organize a military coup in Chile to keep Salvador Allende from becoming President.

Of those four men, one, forced from office on the discovery of his crimes, is free under a pardon. The second awaits the appeal of his conviction for multiple felonies. The third, an ambassador, has been under investigation for possible perjury. The fourth is Secretary of State.

What Americans plotted and did in Chile in 1970 after that meeting is described in harrowing detail in the interim report of the Senate intelligence committee. The Chile story may be the most important part of the report, the one demanding the most reflection by Americans today.

Senator Frank Church described the assassination episodes as "aberrations." That may be true of such grotesqueries as the idea of giving Fidel Castro a diving suit poisoned like Medea's gift of a wedding gown. But the Chile affair cannot be dismissed as long ago or far away or aberrant. Some of its planners remain in office, notably Mr. Helms and Mr. Kissinger. And while everyone in Washington now deplores assassination plots, that is not so clear of attempts to organize coups against other governments.

What makes the Chile story so important is that it was *not* an assassination plot. It was examined by the Church committee because the Commander in Chief of the Chilean Army, Gen. René Schneider, happened to be killed as anti-Allende forces tried to kidnap him. But without that kidnap attempt and killing, the conduct of American officials would be just as troubling.

Richard Helms, for example, reported that he was discouraged at his task of organizing a military coup because "the [Chilean] Army was constitutionalist." That was the attitude of a high official in our constitutional democracy—regret that another democracy's army followed the principles we profess.

If a future President told a Mitchell, a Helms, a Kissinger that he wanted the constitutional system of a friendly country overthrown, would one of them murmur a protest? Would anyone say, "you cannot do that, Mr. President"? Would anyone resign rather than carry out such orders? Or would they simply regret the obstacle

of constitutionalism in the target country?

Or consider the behavior of the American Ambassador to Chile in 1970, Edward Korry. Some of the most loathsome words quoted in the Senate report are his. He was trying to persuade the retiring President of Chile, Eduardo Frei, to join a coup to prevent Salvador Allende's succession. In a report to Mr. Kissinger, Ambassador Korry said he had applied pressure to President Frei by sending him this message:

"Not a not or a bolt will be allowed to reach Chile under Allende. . . . We shall do all within our power to condemn Chile and the Chileans to utmost deprivation and poverty. . . ."

Is that the standard of diplomatic nicety for U.S. ambassadors. We may make allowances for the fact that Korry

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was trying to impress Henry Kissinger, and a show of brutality was likely to be useful. But does American policy now exclude covert threats and bribes and coups against democracies whose election results we dislike?

Henry Kissinger is central to any serious assessment of whether American policy has really changed. He was a key figure in the Chile affair: The C.I.A. was ordered to report directly to him, cutting out normal channels, and a C.I.A. witness said he applied "the heaviest of pressures" for action.

If Mr. Kissinger were big enough to admit error in Chile—or for that matter to defend what was done—that would be one thing. Instead he has tried to escape responsibility, using what could politely be called deception. He testified in 1973 that the C.I.A. had been involved in the 1970 Chilean election in only "a very minor way." If that record of money and guns and subversion was "minor," one shudders to think what he would call major.

Mr. Kissinger testified that the efforts against Dr. Allende were "turned off" at a White House meeting on Oct. 15, 1970. C.I.A. witnesses vigorously disputed this, and C.I.A. minutes of the meeting said Mr. Kissinger directed that the agency "continue keeping the pressures on every weak spot in sight—now, after [the election] and into the future. . . ."

Senator Church and his committee have done a great service in getting this remarkable report published. But they will not be finished until they find out what the United States did in Chile after Oct. 15, 1970—and pin down what covert measures Henry Kissinger is still prepared to use, short of assassination.