

U.S. Involvement in Chile: 'Is There No Decency Left?'

Was the United States involved in the death of democracy in Chile?

When Salvador Allende won the presidential election in 1970 Henry Kissinger expressed his uneasiness and opposition. The intervention directly after the election by IT&T and the conferences between U.S. corporate officials and high governmental officials to discuss ways to undermine the democratically elected government are a matter of public record, most recently publicized by the findings of Sen. Frank Church's committee. The United States cut off all economic assistance to the new government and used its pressure to cut off private banking credits and international funding agency loans. This helped cause the severe food and parts shortages and the high inflation rate which in turn led to much of the social unrest in Chile in recent months. Yet U.S. military assistance was never reduced. The jets which bombed President Allende's private residence and the presidential palace were delivered by the U. S. government.

Ambassador Nathaniel Davis returned to Washington the weekend before the coup to confer with the Chilean task force and undoubtedly with

Kissinger. According to Reuters News Service the U.S. government knew of the coup at least 40 hours in advance.

Congressman Harrington of Massachusetts thinks there is enough evidence to warrant an investigation of U.S. involvement in Chile. It is difficult to convey the anger and sadness which people all over the world feel at this awful occurrence. Sweden has already cut off all economic aid to the unconstitutional government. West Germany has protested, as has the British Labor Party. Chile was a free country, experiencing a freedom that even North Americans who visited that nation envied and admired. Most recently the political freedoms were extended into the economic and social arena, with workers getting a vote in factory affairs, peasants getting a vote in farm affairs, and paraprofessionals having a say in clinic and hospital affairs. Probably it was this expansion of the concept of democracy which caused the United States to use its awesome power against the constitutional government of Chile.

Already we can begin to hear the noises of celebration in U.S. government and corporate circles. Only one

day after the coup, with intense fighting still going on in the streets, Ford Motor Company was reported to say it was gearing up to re-enter Chile. Is there no sense of decency left?

The most immediate question is about political exiles. Around 10,000 Latin Americans who had been tortured in their own countries had been given asylum in Chile during the past three years. It is now possible they will be jailed or sent back to their own countries. Senator Kennedy has asked the United Nations to send observers to Chile. Hopefully citizens in this country can demand that our borders can be opened to these exiles, plus the thousands of Chileans who will undoubtedly meet brutality at the hands of the current military dictatorship. As the civil war and the brutality of the military junta increases, we can only hope that world pressure can minimize the human suffering that is occurring in the country about which Simon Bolivar once wrote, "If any republic is to last a long time in America, I think it will be that of Chile . . . Chile can be free."

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