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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## KISSINGER, NIXON, AND CHILE

I have read with much interest Seymour M. Hersh's article "The Price of Power: Kissinger, Nixon, and Chile," in your December issue, and wonder if I might recall the following episode in the drama of Salvador Allende:

At the beginning of December, 1972, President Allende came to New York to appeal, at the United Nations, against what Mr. Hersh, citing the CIA's own words, describes as the United States' "firm and continuing policy that Allende be overthrown." Following Allende's address on this theme to the UN General Assembly, a lengthy editorial entitled "What Allende Left Out" appeared in *The New York Times* of December 9, 1972, censuring Allende's charges as irresponsible and willfully ill-founded. In that editorial, the loss of monetary credit to Chile from American and international agencies was attributed merely to the premise "that the Allende government is not a good lending risk"; Allende was rebuked for "tarnishing all American firms for the bad deportment of a few," and for "painting official Washington's role in colors too conspiratorial"; and Allende's claim to a popular following in his own country was scathingly disparaged. Criticizing Washington for nothing more than having "acted clumsily" toward Chile, the editorial went on to make the following assertion:

In recounting I.T.T.'s misadventures, Dr. Allende failed to tell his United Nations audience that the Nixon administration wisely ignored I.T.T.'s appeal for CIA and other government help for a 1971 scheme designed to make sure that the Allende government "does not get through the crucial next six months." Similarly vital omissions are evident in Dr. Allende's account of Chile's difficulties with the Kennecott and Anaconda Copper companies.

Allende's accusations on that occasion were in fact mild in comparison with the evidence brought forward in Mr. Hersh's article.

When the *Times* editorial appeared,

edge or political ideologies had already become convinced, from pressure of facts, that it was indeed official United States policy "that Allende be overthrown." A decade has passed; and perhaps Mr. Hersh—who was then at *The New York Times*—can now tell us the source and context of this misguided and influential editorial.

SHIRLEY HAZZARD  
*New York, N.Y.*

Thank you for bringing us Seymour Hersh's account of Nixon and Kissinger's role in plotting to overthrow Salvador Allende. Hersh, though, fails to mention that private U.S. banks had a hand in the economic warfare waged against Chile in the aftermath of Allende's election.

Although they had formerly granted Chile about \$220 million a year in vital short-term loans, after Allende's election, U.S. banks limited their commitments to about \$35 million in 1971 and \$32 million in 1972.

But within eighteen months of the bloody coup that overthrew Allende, U.S. banks flocked to Chile, offering much-needed loans. By 1978, more than 90 percent of the debt of the right-wing military regime in Chile was being covered by loans from U.S. banks, led by Citibank, Bankers Trust, Morgan Guaranty, Wells Fargo, Chemical Bank, and First Chicago. U.S. banks, involved in bringing about economic conditions that made Chile ripe for a military coup, have continued to finance a totalitarian regime—one that, most likely, could not continue existing without the support of the U.S. banking community.

DAVID CORN  
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The article by Seymour M. Hersh promises an exposé it simply fails to deliver. To be sure, Hersh demonstrates that Kissinger, at least, *opposed* any effort to overthrow the election of Salvador Allende in 1970, and did so precisely because he properly *understood the limits of power*. Hersh is disturbed by Kissinger's lack of moral enthusiasm for Allende, rather than by any active political

singer's memoirs, *The White House Years*, makes plain his negative view of the Allende regime. Hersh's article damns Kissinger's morality and, implicitly, his ideology, but fails to state plainly and fairly that Kissinger a) had no role in the efforts to prevent Allende's assumption of the Chilean presidency, and b) even opposed the schemes proposed by CIA officials. Rationalization aside, presumptions of motivations aside, the Hersh piece does not change our knowledge of this historical record one whit.

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