

Henry, the Revisionist

Kissinger's new book, *Years of Renewal* (Simon & Schuster, 1999), includes a twelve-page section entitled "Chile, Human Rights, and the Organization of American States." His account of his meeting with Pinochet varies greatly from the one in the State Department memo I obtained.

In his book, Kissinger writes: "As fate would have it, the meeting was planned to be held in Santiago. . . ." But in the memo, Kissinger says it wasn't fate at all: "I encouraged the OAS to have its General Assembly here. I knew it would add prestige to Chile. I came for that reason." Manuel Trucco, who was then Chile's ambassador to Washington, told me that U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America William Rogers opposed Chile as a venue because of Pinochet's cancellation of an OAS human rights mission.

On human rights, Kissinger writes in his book: "Our strategy offered the occasion and enabled us to raise the human rights issue bilaterally with the Chilean authorities as a test of good relations with the United States."

Kissinger emphasizes in his book that he told Pinochet that Chile's human rights violations cited in an OAS report had impaired the relationship between the two countries. He says he encouraged the general to ease up: "All friends of Chile hope that obstacles raised by conditions alleged in the report will soon be removed." Kissinger writes: "Inevitably, a considerable amount of time in my dialogue with Pinochet was devoted to human rights."

However, the memo reveals that Kissinger actually went to great lengths to reassure Pinochet that the discussion of human rights was strictly pro forma, designed to derail Pinochet's opponents in the U.S. Congress. "We have a practical problem we have to take into account," Kissinger told him. "My statement and our position are designed to allow us to say to the Congress that we are talking to the Chilean government and therefore Congress need not act."

Kissinger also omits in his book the fact that he told Pinochet that "you are a victim of all leftwing groups around the world." He also omitted this comment: "You did a great service to the West in overthrowing Allende."

In his book's account of their conversation, Kissinger writes: "Pinochet reminded me that 'Russia supports their people 100 percent. We are behind you. You are the leader. But you have a punitive system for your friends.' I returned to my underlying theme that any major help from us would realistically depend on progress on human rights."

Actually, Kissinger's next remarks, according to the memo, were: "There is merit in what you say. It is a curious time in the U.S."

Pinochet responded: "We solved the problem of the large transnational enterprises. We renegotiated the expropriations, and demonstrated our good faith by making prompt payments on the indebtedness."

Kissinger, in the memo: "It is unfortunate. We have been through Vietnam and Watergate. . . . We welcomed the overthrow of the communist-inclined government here. We are not out to weaken your position."

—L.K.

constantly being attacked by the Christian Democrats. They have a strong voice in Washington. Not the people in the Pentagon, but they get through to Congress. Gabriel Valdez [a leading Christian Democrat] has access. Also Letelier."

Kissinger: "I have not seen a Christian Democrat for years."

Pinochet: ". . . Letelier has access to the Congress. We know they are giving false information. . . . We are worried about our image." Kissinger did not take the occasion to indicate America's support for the rights of political opponents.

Foreign Minister Carvajal, who had coordinated the attack on La Monedada, didn't like pressures on human rights that were being brought by U.S. Ambassador David Popper. At the meeting, he said to Kissinger, "I don't get along

with Ambassador Popper. I don't understand him, or he doesn't understand the situation here."

"Yes, yes," Kissinger told Carvajal. "Yes, I understand."

Popper had enemies in the State Department. The Pinochet government often got unofficial, unrequested information from them—gossip or photocopies of things that had been said by the man whom Department conservatives called "the Red Popper." One of his enemies flagged the information for the Secretary of State in a routine cable from the U.S. embassy in Santiago.

As investigative reporter Seymour Hersh first reported, Kissinger wrote on the document, "Tell Popper to cut out the political science lectures."

The ambassador got a call from Rogers, who said, "You should know that at higher

levels, a certain disquiet has been caused." Harry Schlaudeman, an assistant secretary for Latin America and number two at the American embassy in Chile during the U.S. pre-coup destabilization campaign, drafted a letter to Popper in which he tried to suggest that the ambassador was getting "too enthusiastic."

One bizarre note in the Kissinger-Pinochet memorandum suggests that the general recognized he was violating human rights. He told Kissinger, "On the human rights front, we are slowly making progress. We are now down to 400. We have freed more. And we are also changing some sentences so that the prisoners can be eligible for leaving." Kissinger's response: He advised Pinochet to "group the releases" for better "psychological impact."

After the formal meeting, Kissinger and Rogers went off to have lunch with Pinochet on another floor of the Diego Portales building.

Kissinger's address to the assembly that afternoon was one of his usual *tour d'horizon* speeches. As he had promised Pinochet, Kissinger cited the reports of human rights abuses in Chile but didn't condemn the government. "The condition of human rights as assessed by the Organization of American States' Human Rights Commission has impaired [the U.S.] relationship with Chile and will continue to do so. We wish this relationship to be close, and all friends of Chile hope that obstacles raised by conditions alleged in the report will soon be removed."

Rogers, who had helped draft the speech, told me he had "pushed Henry's envelope to the outer edge in terms of emphasizing human rights." The statement about the U.S. vote on authorization of a human rights commission was worked over carefully. Rogers got Kissinger to say it, but noticed that he chafed over it before and after the speech. Nobody else thought it was terribly bold.

Carvajal thought Kissinger's speech "balanced," and was pleased that it referred to the exaggerations of the Chilean problem. Carvajal told me that he interpreted Kissinger's private remarks to Pinochet to mean that he didn't really believe what he had said publicly. Carvajal said, "The U.S. understands that things in Chile are difficult, that maybe the steps taken by Washington were exaggerated, that things would have been worse if Chile hadn't acted."

Kissinger and Rogers left two days later. Kissinger told a Chilean diplomat in Washington that he and his wife, Nancy, had been received like pop stars.

James Wilson, then the State Department's coordinator for humanitarian affairs, heard that shortly after his return to Washington, Kissinger passed the word to his staff that he did not want all he had said publicly applied too literally in practice. ■