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Tanya Harmer. *Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011. 375 S. $45.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8078-3495-4.

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On September 11, 1973, President Salvador Allende broadcast his final address to the Chilean people. In it he blamed "foreign capital and imperialism, united with reactionary elements" for the coup that would end both his government and his life. Following his death, a junta headed by General Augusto Pinochet, supported by Brazil and supplied with U.S. aid, embarked on a campaign to eradicate the Chilean Left, torturing and murdering thousands over the next two decades. The outline of this story is well-known, yet Tonya Harmer argues that common understandings of Allende's presidency have been shaped by "a narrow historiography of blame" that stems from a fixation on the bilateral relationship between Washington and Santiago (p. 7). In this richly researched book, she sets out to provide more nuanced examinations of Chile's place within the American system and the Allende government's foreign policy by focusing on the interactions "between the domestic and the international, the bilateral and the multilateral" (p. 6). Her thesis holds that, rather than a manifestation of the global contest between Washington and Moscow, the events of 1970-73 were part of an inter-American Cold War struggle waged by Chile, Cuba, the United States, and Brazil.

Through seven chronological chapters, a wealth of source material culled from the archives of seven countries and more than two dozen interviews allows Harmer to challenge previous interpretations of Chile's socialist manqué. First, she argues that recent efforts to "pin the blame" for the betrayal of Chilean democracy on Henry Kissinger, Richard Nixon, or specific departments within the U.S. policymaking establishment are misguided. Although she finds that Nixon was "pivotal in framing the administration's overall approach to Latin America from late 1970 onward," consensus reigned on the need to remove Allende from office (p. 272). Second, she asserts that Allende was neither a misunderstood reformist nor "hoodwinked by [Fidel] Castro or subverted by Cuban revolutionary and far left forces operating in Chile" (p. 260). Instead, he was a socialist revolutionary, albeit one wedded to constitutional democracy. Indeed, Harmer believes that the relationship between Cuba and the Chileans has been mischaracterized. Rather than working to subvert constitutional democracy, as some have argued, she finds that the Cubans consistently supported Allende and deferred to his authority.[1] Finally, Harmer convincingly demonstrates the relative impotence of foreign powers that sought to manage Chilean events. In the end, "it was the Chilean military–not Washington–that ultimately decided to act, and despite Cuban preparations to face a coup, it was also Allende and the Chilean Left" who proved unable to defend La Vía Chilena (p. 221). Surprisingly, the most influential international participants in the Chilean drama proved to be the military regime in Brasilia, which both offered a model for a post-Allende Chile and directly supported the coup plotters. In light of Harmer's evidence, historians will have to revise their understanding of Brasilia as a "passive, ineffectual appendage to the United States" in the Southern Cone (p. 273).

Harmer's opening chapter provides essential background information by detailing the evolution of the inter-American system from the Cuban Revolution to Allende's election. By the early 1970s, Cuban efforts to support revolution in the hemisphere had yet to bear fruit even as the failure to meet domestic goals proved that the road to socialism would be longer than previously anticipated. In response, Havana adopted a more careful, flexible policy which recognized multiple paths to revolution. Likewise, a more assertive Third World and widespread international disillusionment with U.S. policy forced the Nixon administration to announce a new, "mature partnership" with Latin America. Yet "U.S. and Cuban reappraisals … were nevertheless still essentially based on the same values and strategic aims that had guided their policies throughout the 1960s" (p. 47).

Two subsequent chapters treat the international reac-

tion to Allende's unexpected electoral victory and Santiago's international relations during the first months of the new administration. Harmer argues that Havana and Washington "were motivated by their assessments of the impact that Allende's election would have on the inter-American balance of power" (p. 49). Chile became the visible manifestation of a broader contest for influence in the hemisphere. Thus, each set of policymakers struggled to define strategies that would not endanger the more reasonable profiles they were attempting to promote abroad. The United States, she notes, faced the challenge of derailing a democratically elected president without obviously forsaking U.S. ideals, while Cuba sought to bolster a constitutional democrat without tarnishing his democratic credentials. Meanwhile, Allende's Unidad Popular (UP) "emphasized a foreign policy of 'ideological pluralism' while pursuing active diplomacy aimed at forging the best relations with as many countries as possible" (p. 75). Recognizing the danger posed by Washington, the UP attempted to minimize its vulnerability by forging relations with other Latin American nations and minimizing pretexts for overt U.S. action. The Chileans also sought to negotiate with the United States, but here they misjudged the Nixon administration's goals. While Santiago "continued to focus on Allende's nationalization plans as the determinant of U.S.-Chilean relations," the U.S. president was more concerned about the impact that Allende would have on U.S. influence in the region (p. 85).

As Harmer illustrates in chapters 4 and 5, Santiago's activist foreign policy proved largely unsuccessful, even as the balance of power in the Southern Cone shifted decisively to the Right, and Allende's political coalition splintered under the stress of U.S. pressure. While the UP's idealist foreign policy won admirers, it proved unable to bridge the divisions that plagued the G77. The Soviets also kept their distance, both due to détente with the United States and because they were "wary about backing a project that had not yet proven itself to be viable" (p. 116). Meanwhile, the adoption of the Allende Doctrine, which deducted "excess profits" from the restitution due nationalized foreign concerns, gave the United States a justifiable pretext for overt economic pressure. By 1972, Allende's democratic revolution was imperiled by U.S. economic pressure; preexisting splits in the UP; and Castro's overlong tour of the country, which bred political polarization. When the president resorted to military force to put down a truckers' strike in October 1972, "he took a huge risk in politicizing military leaders and making their cooperation central to La Vía Chilena's survival" (p. 184). Anti-Marxist military leaders, inspired by their peers in Brazil, now became directly involved in the struggle over Chile's political future.

Finally, Harmer turns to the end of Allende's vision of La Vía Chilena. Because Allende's government seemed to be besieged, U.S. officials were shocked when the UP fared well in the 1973 congressional elections and determined that a coup was the only chance to redeem Chile from the Marxist threat. Yet Harmer stresses that neither Washington nor Cuba had the capability to control events in Chile. Allende's Cuban advisors were certain that a counterrevolution was imminent and urged the president to mobilize the population. But "Allende refused to take a different nondemocratic or violent road" (p. 218). Meanwhile, U.S. officials deemed a coup unlikely to succeed in 1973 and failed to offer more than financial assistance and moral support, even when prodded by Brasilia's military regime. Thus, Harmer argues that "in trying to understand the international dimensions of Chile's coup … the distinction between 'creating the conditions' for a coup and 'masterminding' it is important" (p. 221). While U.S. economic and diplomatic pressure helped set the stage, Washington remained ignorant of Pinochet's intentions. In the event, it was the Chileans themselves who had to act. Both the Left and Right saw themselves as nationalists defending the country from foreign domination and acted according to their belief that Chile was the stage for an international ideological struggle. Thus, Harmer believes that the United States cannot be held entirely responsible for the events of September 11, 1973, although it is certainly not blameless for the events that followed. Once the military coup was underway, "the whole Nixon administration took calculated steps to help a future repressive military dictatorship survive and consolidate its hold over its citizens" (p. 253). In the end, however, there is more than enough blame to go around for the fall of La Vía Chilena.

Overall, Harmer is successful in illustrating how Chile's short-lived socialist democracy affected the balance of power in the inter-American Cold War. Moreover, her analysis of the impact and limits of foreign influence on La Vía Chilena makes a substantial contribution by moving beyond the assignation of blame. Although a diplomatic history, *Allende's Chile* will appeal to historians in several disciplines. Those interested in militarism and the military's role in Latin America can benefit from the work's discussion of Brazil's influence in the Southern Cone. Historians who focus on globalization and the rise of the "global South" will seize on Harmer's analysis of Allende's efforts to cultivate the G77 and the failure to transcend regional divisions within the Third World. Yet the book's greatest contribution is

as a model of a successful multinational narrative. Hopefully, Harmer's challenge to transcend mono-national perspectives will be taken up by the wider scholarly community.

Note

[1]. See, for example, Jonathan Haslam, *The Nixon Administration and the Death of Allende's Chile: A Case of Assisted Suicide* (London: Verso, 2005).

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