

# Nixon, Kissinger, and Allende

*U.S. Involvement in the 1973 Coup in Chile*

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## CHAPTER FOUR



# Undermining the Chilean Experiment: 1971

President Allende began the year 1971 expressing no ill will toward the United States. Even though Nixon had refrained from congratulating Allende for his victory, the leader of Chile publicly expressed his desire for “friendly relations with the most powerful country in the hemisphere so long as it can admit disagreement and dissent.”<sup>1</sup> He also insisted that his administration would “never permit the construction of a foreign military base by any power.”<sup>2</sup> In conference with Ambassador Korry and Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Charles A. Meyer, the Chilean president gave his word that his country would not enter any entangling foreign alliances.<sup>3</sup>

Nixon did not care about Allende’s promises. “We’re still keeping our tough policy with regard to Chile,” the president told Kissinger.<sup>4</sup> The Pentagon may have speculated that Socialist rule in Chile would make the Straits of Magellan vulnerable if the Panama Canal came under attack, but the United States really did not have to fear for its physical security.<sup>5</sup> To Nixon, Allende represented a loss for the United States rather than a gain for the Soviet Union. If Chile could break free from the North American empire, what would stop other Latin American countries from doing so? As I have noted in the previous chapter, Nixon admitted to Kissinger: “I know the argument, of course, that if we get out, we lose our [stroke?] there. The Russians will be happy to come in, and so forth and so on. But the fact is that he [Allende] is just gonna [wheel? reel?] us in, frankly, and also that treating him well is going to encourage others to go do likewise. That’s what I’m more concerned about.”<sup>6</sup>

Sharing his superior's attitude, Kissinger sarcastically dismissed Chile as "a dagger pointed at the heart of Antarctica."<sup>7</sup> Ironically, the national security advisor was merely repeating the assessment of Ernesto "Che" Guevara. The late Argentine revolutionary had studied the maps and determined that Chile was not a suitable pad from which to launch a revolution in the Southern Cone. Geographically, Chile was but a slender strip caught between the Andes and the Pacific. The Atacama desert and an icy wonderland served as the northern and southern borders, respectively. In his planning, Guevara had favored Argentina, Peru, and Bolivia, the country where Guevara ultimately perished in 1967.<sup>8</sup>

No matter what Guevara had thought, it is unlikely that Allende would have struggled to liberate Chile from dependence on the United States only to subjugate his country to the Soviet Union, an empire potentially just as oppressive. The Chilean foreign minister, Clodomiro Almeyda, articulated a point that remains relevant today for Americans bewildered by international resentment of Washington policy: "It seems to me there exists a distinction between anti-imperialism and anti-Americanism. Actually, Chile's foreign policy is not aimed against any people of the world. Consequently, neither is it against the people of the United States. It is a policy designed to break the dependent relationship of Chile's economy with respect to interests which are not ours."<sup>9</sup>

Allende began to break this dependent relationship with the nationalization of the copper mines. Under the Allende administration, Jorge Arrate served as the chief executive officer of CODELCO, the public copper corporation. As a man of the left, Arrate did not think highly of President Frei, but he later commended the Christian Democrat for beginning the process of reform with his Chileanization program. "Probably, that's why the right in Chile baptized him as the Chilean Kerensky," Arrate observed.<sup>10</sup> Just as Alexander Kerensky inadvertently enabled the triumph of his more radical successor, Vladimir Lenin, in Russia in 1917, Frei performed the same function for Allende in Chile in 1970.

Truly significant change, however, only took place once Allende came to power. In the years since the coup, critics have attributed the failure of his Socialist experiment to political polarization within Chile. Yet, the politics of the Andean nation were not so polarized that Allende could not expropriate the copper mines through legal and constitutional means. In fact, on July 11 the Chilean Congress unanimously passed the constitutional amendment that made the nationalization possible. With justification, Allende felt triumphant: "Remember that in slightly more than 50 years more than \$3 billion has left the country by way of copper profits. Now, with the national-

ization, we will retain 90 million additional dollars annually. This will mean, in the next 20 years . . . 1.83 billion dollars.”<sup>11</sup>

This amendment honored the principle of fair compensation, but allowed deductions from the compensation to copper companies for excess profits. Authorized by the amendment to determine the maximum profit level that was not in excess, Allende arrived at the figure of 12 percent. Consulting the register of profits for the U.S. copper corporations, which dated back to 1953, Allende made retroactive deductions.<sup>12</sup> Ultimately, the Chilean government would withhold \$675 million from Kennecott and \$364 million from Anaconda.<sup>13</sup> Arrate recalled: “So, when he applied, according to the constitution, the twelve percent backwards to the profits obtained by the companies, the amount that he had to deduct was more than the value of two of these four companies [mines], Chuquicamata [an Anaconda mine] and [Kennecott’s] El Teniente, and very large in the case of [Anaconda’s] El Salvador, the third mine, and almost nil in the case of the fourth mine, Andina, that was owned by Cerro Corporation [Cerro de Pasco, another U.S. company], and who got almost one hundred percent compensation of the book value.”<sup>14</sup>

Besides Chuquicamata and El Salvador, Anaconda also lost its 75 percent share in the Exotica mine. Nevertheless, the new Chilean law allowed for fair consideration of corporate interests. Taking the constitutionally mandated course of action, the Chilean Comptroller General’s office, or *contraloría*, awarded Cerro de Pasco \$18 million in compensation upon determination that the company had not accumulated excess profits. The Chilean Special Court increased this award by almost \$1 million the following year. Anaconda and Kennecott, of course, won nothing from the comptroller-general.<sup>15</sup> Despite this loss, the Allende administration assured the two corporations that it would deduct the excess profits solely from their own shares in the mines. After all, Frei’s Chileanization scheme had left Anaconda with only 49 percent of Chuquicamata and El Salvador, and Kennecott with 49 percent of El Teniente.<sup>16</sup>

The Nixon administration could have reached an accommodation with Chile. In Santiago, the minister of the interior made an interesting communication to the U.S. ambassador. Korry reported to the secretary of state that “Allende wanted me to understand GOC’s disposition to seek to avoid dispute over copper and that he had charged [Interior Minister] Toha with sounding me further on details.”<sup>17</sup> Interestingly, Korry’s own dispatches growing tolerance for Allende. It did not matter to Nixon. He was outraged by the expropriation, but Arrate believed that the president seized on the copper issue an excuse to torment the Allende government: “So, much time before

Allende came to government, or Allende nationalized copper, or Allende applied excess profits, or fixed the compensation of the copper companies, the U.S. policy was already punishing Chile. Certainly, the copper question became an additional question to reinforce U.S. policy, and I understand that because this decision by Allende of applying excess profits, to the excess profits concept, to the American companies had an international impact.”<sup>18</sup>

Far more than the loss of the copper mines in Chile, Nixon feared the example the Chilean expropriations would set for the rest of Latin America, and indeed the entire Western Hemisphere. The president listened carefully to the advice of Treasury Secretary John Connally, who advocated a hard line. Connally eschewed the idea of cooperation with the rest of the world: “Foreigners are out to screw us. Our job is to screw them first.”<sup>19</sup> Less crudely, Nixon explained Connally’s viewpoint to Kissinger: “Now here’s his argument. His argument is that, that for example, Guyana, we have \$500 million worth of contracts with Guyana in bauxite and so forth. They’re willing to expropriate. Chile is getting away with it. The Jamaicans, the Jamaicans are willing to expropriate and so forth and so on.”<sup>20</sup>

In Connally’s view, the United States had to regain control of Chile’s copper. Connally wrote to Nixon that “it is in our interest to facilitate the development of the mineral resources of Chile. That country is practically unique in the resources it has under soil.”<sup>21</sup> Apparently, it never occurred to the treasury secretary that the United States could have purchased Chilean copper on Chilean terms. Like the other members of the Nixon administration, Connally feared the example that Allende would set for the rest of the world, noting America’s growing reliance on imported minerals.<sup>22</sup>

Kissinger feared that any concessions to Allende and his ilk in Latin America would lead to imperial decline. “We are sliding into the position of Great Britain around World War I,” the former Harvard professor lectured in the Oval Office. “Yeah,” Nixon replied with deference to Kissinger’s erudition. “In the nineteenth century, they were so far ahead that no one could compete with them,” the expert on European history continued. “It took them about thirty years to realize that they had become second-class.”<sup>23</sup>

For a more succinct description of the White House mindset, one must turn to a scholar who remained active in his own academic field, Richard R. Fagen. “Once again, the specter of the dominoes arose, again with a global cast,” Fagen wrote.<sup>24</sup> Just as President Nixon had senselessly committed himself to keeping the domino of South Vietnam erect in Asia, he now committed himself to preventing the fall of any Latin American dominoes after Chile. Nixon concealed his covert actions against Allende, but he intended his official policy on Chile to serve as a warning to its neighbors. Shortly af-

ter the confiscation of the copper mines, the president warned that in the case of any uncompensated seizures, the United States would “withhold its support from loans under consideration in multilateral development banks.”<sup>25</sup> Treasury Secretary John Connally in particular pushed for this strategy. Connally placed enormous pressure on the president of the World Bank, former Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara. Speaking to Nixon, Connally expressed his opinions in a forceful manner: “I’m gonna have lunch with Bob tomorrow to try to make him insist on a policy that no World Bank loan will be made to any country that has expropriated properties, and without some definite plans of compensation, and I think that’s only fair.”<sup>26</sup>

From 1964 to 1971, Chile had collected over \$1 billion from the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Export-Import Bank, and the Agency for International Development. Since the United States possessed 23 percent of the votes in the World Bank and dominated the Inter-American Development Bank, this meant an end to loans from these institutions.<sup>27</sup> Connally would forbid the American members of the development banks from approving any loans to Chile.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, credit would no longer come from the Agency for International Development or the Eximbank, which were both entirely controlled by the U.S. government.<sup>29</sup> The Exim Bank cut-off was particularly painful, for it affected a Chilean application for a \$21 million loan needed for the procurement of one 727 and two 707 Boeing jets. LAN-Chile, the national airline, was a good credit risk. “The preliminary studies conducted by Boeing Co. show that this operation is commercially sound and that the aircraft services would produce enough revenues to cover the credits eventually agreed on for this purpose,” the Chilean embassy pointed out.<sup>30</sup> The granting of the loan had been almost certain before the expropriation.<sup>31</sup>

Very disturbed by this sudden reversal, Chilean Ambassador Orlando Letelier met with Kissinger in Washington. Speaking for Allende, with whom he had conferred a few days earlier, Letelier expressed the preference for closer economic ties to the West than the East. According to the minutes of their meeting:

The Ambassador indicated that if the Boeing planes were not available, the only real alternative Chile would have would be to buy Soviet planes. Chile needs long-range aircraft, and the only equivalent to the 707s were Ilyushin turboprops. He stated that a decision already had been made in principle to buy the Soviet planes, but that this would be a tragedy for Chile—the Soviet planes are much more expensive (around \$100 million); LAN-Chile would have 50 percent U.S. planes and 50 percent Soviet planes, which would present problems and might even require shifting the fleet completely to Soviet planes.<sup>32</sup>

To the distinguished diplomat's face, Kissinger denied any involvement with Eximbank's abrupt turnaround, claiming "that his function was not to solve the problems of American business. He again reiterated that he did handle individual loans."<sup>33</sup> Letelier pointed out that Eximbank officers had admitted to him that their decision had been political rather than financial, "that they were concerned about the reaction of the Senate and other sectors." Letelier, who was probably too tactful to mention that Eximbank was also concerned about the reaction of the White House, asked the national security advisor to "clarify these political aspects so the loan could go forward."<sup>34</sup> Offering little encouragement, Kissinger only "indicated that . . . he would take a look at this matter, but emphasized that he had not taken an active role in this loan, and that he was not sure he wanted to get into these commercial matters."<sup>35</sup>

In fact, Kissinger was heavily invested in these commercial matters. Well before his confrontation with Letelier, Kissinger had conferred with an Eximbank official. The national security advisor later explained the retaliatory scheme to the president: "He can attach banking conditions, which, if they don't come across on expropriation, enable us to prevent the thing from coming through. What they would do is retrieve the application and process it over a period longer than the expropriation hearings."<sup>36</sup>

In many ways, this strategy was as covertly underhanded as the plotting against the late General Schneider. Kissinger warned Nixon that "an openly restrictive policy would be inconsistent with our public statements on Chile (and with our more forthcoming trade policies vis-à-vis the Soviet bloc and China), and would help Allende gain sympathy in Chile and abroad, thus making it easier for him to treat the U.S. companies unfairly."<sup>37</sup>

Kissinger's thinking matched that of the corporate world. That year, Secretary of State Rogers held a meeting with representatives of the companies most threatened by the Allende experiment: ITT, Anaconda, Ralston Purina, the Bank of America, and the First National City Bank. Several of the attendees, including Jack Guilfoyle and J.R. McNitt of ITT, lobbied for a punitive credit policy. The delegates from the First City National Bank and the Bank of America favored subtlety: "The bankers take the position that there should be no publicity, just not to approve the loan and let it slide along."<sup>38</sup> Kissinger did not arrive at this same passive-aggressive strategy by mere coincidence. Knowing where power rested in Washington, the corporations did not stop their lobbying with Secretary Rogers. They also met with Kissinger and his underlings. An internal Anaconda memorandum shows that the copper company worked closely with ITT to influence the national security advisor. "The idea is to keep the pressure on Kissinger and the White House," the memorandum stated.<sup>39</sup>

With this pressure, Chile did not get the loan for the jets, but the economic retribution did not end there. Kissinger embarked on total economic war, intending “to maintain economic pressure on Chile in order to contribute to Allende’s economic problems and to help prevent the consolidation of his regime.”<sup>40</sup> Through aggressive use of its own judicial system, the United States also froze stateside accounts belonging to the government of Chile.<sup>41</sup> Allende had anticipated that state control of the copper industry would enrich his country immeasurably, but the controversy now made the export of copper to the United States an absolute impossibility.

When the Chilean president turned to Western Europe as an alternative market, however, Kennecott worked to foil his plans. Taking legal action in France, Holland, Sweden, Italy, and Germany, Kennecott tried to block the copper sales. Although Germany did seize a shipment of copper, eventually a judge in Hamburg reversed this seizure. Chile was not so fortunate elsewhere. A French court agreed to freeze the profits from a shipment to the port of Le Havre, so Chile could not claim its entitled \$1.3 million until the court determined if Kennecott was not still the rightful recipient. A delivery to Sweden was confiscated. At the port of Rotterdam, a Dutch court froze yet another copper shipment. Kennecott’s campaign frightened other potential customers away. Furthermore, European banks now regarded Chile as a bad credit risk, and the beleaguered country lost \$200 million in potential credit. The evidence suggests the possibility of collusion between Kennecott and the U.S. government. “Sure, we’re in touch from time to time,” a State Department spokesman admitted. “We’re interested in solutions to problems. And you don’t get solutions by sitting on your hands.”<sup>42</sup>

As devastating as these legal actions were, their impact could not compare to the shortage of the machine components required for copper mining. Purchasing these components clearly had never been easy, as Arrate described the mining procedure “which started from the moment in which the mineral is extracted, to the process in which the mineral is crushed, and then when it’s crushed, you have to concentrate the mineral, and once concentrated, you melt the mineral, and once the mineral is melted, you have to refine it. So, this continuous process of production demands very complex machinery, and for each machine there were hundreds of thousands of small things and parts and pieces.”<sup>43</sup>

The United States had been the main supplier of these parts, but the expropriation put an end to that arrangement. The confiscation of Chilean assets in the United States forced CODELCO to procure these parts through intermediaries, which proved very expensive.<sup>44</sup>

Despite the widespread criticism of the UP economic program that continues to this day, the governmental operation of the copper industry was remarkably profitable, and its income grew by 8.3 percent in 1971 alone. More than three decades after the coup, CODELCO remains in state hands. Arrate estimated that the state-owned company's profits in the ten or fifteen years after expropriation equaled one-half of the Chilean national debt. "It's a public enterprise," Arrate noted with pride. "It's administered by people who are nominated by the government. And it works very well."<sup>45</sup> The never-ending campaign of certain businessmen to privatize CODELCO indicates its success. "That's obvious," the former CODELCO executive concludes. "This is big business. It's very good business. So, they like to privatize things in which they could earn a lot of money."<sup>46</sup>

Copper was not the only source of financial friction between Chile and the United States. In order to make telephone service more widely available in Chile, the Allende government assumed full control of Chiltelco, of which ITT owned seventy percent. As with the copper companies, the Chilean state and ITT could not agree over the value of the subsidiary. The Allende regime appraised Chiltelco at \$24 million, while the corporation demanded \$153 million in compensation. Interestingly, Chile might already have compensated ITT in 1966. The Frei administration had paid ITT \$186 million to expand its service, even though another foreign corporation had outbid it. Of course, ITT would not see things that way. Like Kennecott and Anaconda, ITT would only resolve the issue to its advantage once the military junta came to power.<sup>47</sup>

Once relations with the United States reached the point of dysfunction, Allende desperately sought new, more equitable partnerships abroad. Breaking the dependence of the Chilean armed forces on the United States was an almost unrealistic project. Despite the economic blockade of Chile, the United States remained the main supplier of armaments to her military. Arrate recalled: "Allende made the attempt to orient the militaries to buy also Soviet weapons, and I think there was some official trips of military men to the Soviet Union to see weaponry, and see the possibilities of buying . . . but it was very difficult."<sup>48</sup>

Chile's economic diplomacy also met with little success. When Allende approached European countries such as France, Spain, Sweden, Holland, West Germany, and Finland for replacement of the credits that had been cut off by the United States, he found that such assistance would only come conditionally. European credit required the purchase of European goods.<sup>49</sup> The Chilean president also turned to the Kremlin for credit. The Soviet experience with Cuba made the socialist superpower disinclined to sponsor another

Latin American country, however. By this point, Fidel Castro's own economic experiment was draining Moscow of approximately one-half billion dollars annually.<sup>50</sup> "The Soviet Union was not in a position to support the Allende experiment in the way that Allende needed," Arrate remembered.<sup>51</sup>

So, how much support was the Soviet Union able to provide Chile? It is difficult to find a precise determination. We do know that trade between the Soviet Union and Chile grew from 300,000 rubles in 1969 to 7.8 million rubles two years later. The Soviets also offered to sell the Chileans 6.5 million rubles worth of tractors in 1971. As for financial assistance, Moscow furnished Chile with approximately 100,000 tons of wheat that same year. For the entire Allende presidency, estimates of Soviet aid ranged from \$183 million to \$340 million, with the higher end of the range bearing the most probability.<sup>52</sup>

On May 28, 1971, Chilean Foreign Minister Clodomiro Almeyda traveled to Moscow to work out an agreement on trade as well as technical and cultural assistance. Almeyda managed to renegotiate old Soviet credits from the Frei period that had been unexploited. Moscow also provided between \$15 and \$55 million dollars in additional credits for the sale of machinery and equipment, Soviet-made, of course. Surely Soviet sponsorship of plans for a basic oils plant and a prefabricated panel factory would have given the Nixon administration no cause for alarm! For the Chilean fishing industry, the USSR also promised in September to assist in the development of ports and make watercraft available for charter. In addition, the Soviet Union also dispatched twenty experts on the copper industry to Chile to provide help and advice.<sup>53</sup> When examined closely in detail, this assistance is not terribly impressive. It could not match the aid previously furnished by Washington, but then again, Moscow did not want to assume its rival's formal role. Interestingly, the Communist superpower felt obligated to assist the fledgling Socialist government in its nationalization programs, but the official Soviet organ *Pravda* cautioned Chile to preserve free enterprise "for a long time to come."<sup>54</sup>

Ideological attitudes inhibited the Soviets from offering the Chilean road to socialism their wholehearted support. Marxist-Leninist philosophy dictated that Third World countries had to complete two developmental stages before attaining socialist statehood. The anti-imperialist stage was the first one, which was then followed by the phase of socialist construction. Although Moscow regarded Cuba as an ideological work-in-progress, the beleaguered island had at least reached the second stage of development. Allende's Chile was barely in the first.<sup>55</sup> Accordingly, only Cuba merited the kind of special assistance to which a favored client was entitled. Moscow could only extend its generosity so far. A contemporary Soviet expert on the Third World, R. Ulyanovsky, baldly translated the Kremlin view: "In effect,

assistance from the socialist community which actively opposes imperialism, is the foundation of non-capitalist development and the factor making this development possible. [However] assistance from the socialist countries necessarily bears the character of mutually beneficial cooperation, because the resources of one side obviously cannot satisfy the acute and growing requirements of the countries that have taken or are prepared to take the road of non-capitalist development.”<sup>56</sup>

Indeed, the public pronouncements issued by the Kremlin about Chile indicated passive sympathy rather than active commitment. Speaking before the 24th Party Congress in 1971, General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev offered Chile nothing substantial even as he celebrated Allende’s electoral triumph. “This has incensed domestic reaction and Yankee imperialism, which seek to deprive the Chilean people of their gains,” Brezhnev declared. “However, the people of Chile are fully determined to advance along their chosen path.”<sup>57</sup> In spite of this outward confidence, Brezhnev regarded Chile as too unstable for a substantial investment. The Chilean right wing was gaining too much force. According to Soviet Ambassador A.V. Basov in Santiago, “the political climate in the country was not conducive to the interests of . . . the rule of *Unidad Popular*.”<sup>58</sup>

Like his diplomatic counterparts Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, Brezhnev was an accomplished practitioner of *realpolitik*. Chile simply was not part of the Soviet sphere of influence. “Foreign aid is a political-economic instrument that is used in conjunction with other techniques to gain power and influence in strategically vital areas,” political scientists Joseph L. Noguee and John W. Sloan observed in 1979.<sup>59</sup> As much as the Soviets railed against Western imperialism, they had quietly resigned themselves to Latin America’s unofficial status as a U.S. possession since the humiliation of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Furthermore, trade between the U.S.S.R. and Latin America was minimal because they offered the same products on the international market most of the time.<sup>60</sup> Since the Soviets did not expect Latin America to ever enhance its strategic or economic interests, they directed their beneficence elsewhere. “The bulk of Soviet assistance—about 80 percent—has gone to a narrow band of nations extending from the Mediterranean to China’s southwestern borders,” Noguee and Sloan pointed out.<sup>61</sup>

Documents show that analysts in the Nixon administration shared the conclusions of Noguee and Sloan. Nevertheless, the NSC’s Senior Review Group had to speculate about every possible contingency: “In the future, should the Allende regime be receptive . . . the USSR might attempt to secure the use of facilities for the maintenance and replenishment of Soviet combatant ships and submarines.”<sup>62</sup> Conjectures aside, the Senior Review

Group fully expected Chile to cultivate the Soviet Union. Acknowledging Allende's fiercely nationalist spirit, the analysts doubted that the Chilean president would ever permit Moscow to turn his country into a Soviet protectorate. Nor they did they believe that the Soviets had such a goal, because "they are more interested in using Chile as a cornerstone for the gradual long-term expansion of their interests in Latin America than in duplicating Cuba's total dependency."<sup>63</sup> The White House policy amounted to little more than an old-fashioned defense of the Monroe Doctrine. The policy-makers wanted to keep all outside powers, not just the Soviets, from their turf: "as U.S. influence declines, other powers, including Western Europe, Japan and some of the other larger Latin American countries themselves will seek to fill the vacuum. A greater role for these other countries may be the most effective way in which Soviet influence can be preempted. However, we have traditionally resisted the intrusion of extra-Hemispheric powers to prevent dilution of our political influence and loss of our markets for trade and investment."<sup>64</sup>

In contrast to Brezhnev in Moscow, Castro in Cuba demonstrated a heartfelt commitment to the Allende experiment. In a public address in Havana, Castro promised Allende's Chile "when you need it you can count on our sugar, and when you need it you can count on our blood, and when you need it you can count on our lives."<sup>65</sup> At the same time, he warned Allende not to "ignite" revolutions throughout Latin America. No doubt fearing for Allende's own political survival, the Cuban leader expressed the desire that "all the conflict situations in Latin America would continue to be attributed solely to him." Castro even encouraged Allende "not to worry if he had to wait six months, a year, or two" until commencing official diplomatic relations with Cuba. As it turns out, Allende did not even bother to wait to do so.<sup>66</sup> Moving beyond the ambassadorial-level exchanges, Allende also received Castro in Santiago in November of 1971. The Cuban leader feared that his Chilean counterpart was too attached to bourgeois modes of democratic governance. Such a system, Castro believed, was too vulnerable to violent takeover by reactionary forces. The Cuban leader tried to make his point to Allende by using his own island nation as an example: "In our country, men and women are willing to fight until the last drop of blood. And imperialism knows this. And that's why they respect us. And I don't believe they have a remote possibility of crushing the revolution."<sup>67</sup> In Castro's view, Allende was so ill-prepared to do battle against the forces of imperialism that even the defenses for the Cuban embassy were inadequate: "I could take this embassy alone in 2 hours!" Obviously, he did not say this in the presence of Allende.<sup>68</sup>

Despite his own doubts about Socialist Chile's long-term survival, Castro dispatched an advisory team from the Cuban General Department of National Liberation to Chile to assist in the development of a presidential bodyguard for Allende. Luis Fernandez Oña, the head of this three-member team, had recently married Allende daughter Beatriz. When Oña first came to Chile, he was dismayed by the meager protection Allende already had. They "didn't have arms or anything! They had a little pistol, two little pistols!"<sup>69</sup> Thanks to Cuban training and generosity, Allende soon enjoyed his own highly competent bodyguard, known as the *Grupo de Amigos Personales*, or Group of Personal Friends. As 1971 came to an end, the CIA reported that "the haphazard collection of sidearms formerly used by GAP members has almost been totally replaced by Cuban-provided .45 caliber Colt automatic pistols, 9mm Browning automatic pistols and Czech 38 automatic pistols."<sup>70</sup> From 1970 to September 1973, Havana provided 3,000 pieces of weaponry to leftist factions in Chile. Although the Socialists and Communists took some arms, the revolutionary socialist group MIR or *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionario*, was the major beneficiary. Almost 2,000 Chileans, including many MIR members, also benefited from Cuban training.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, we shall see that Havana's relative generosity could not compete with Washington's exorbitant contribution to the Chilean military.

In order to reserve Latin America for the United States, the Nixon administration planned to solve the Chilean question by military means. In his memoir, Kissinger blamed Allende for the credit blockade: "A country defaulting on its foreign debts is scarcely creditworthy whatever its form of government."<sup>72</sup> Still, at the same time that the Chile's civilian sector suffered from Kissingerian stinginess, its armed forces reveled in Kissingerian benevolence.

On March 6, 1970, the Chilean military presented Washington with the following shopping list:

Airbase Ground Support Equipment  
 106 mm Recoilless Rifles  
 Gearing Class Destroyers  
 Jet Ranger Helicopters  
 105 mm Howitzers  
 C-130 Transport<sup>73</sup>

Roughly, the items were worth \$7 million. Kissinger's National Security Council staff recommended offering credit adequate for the purchase of the most important items. Rejecting the request would "cause resentment in the Chilean armed forces and could sever our tenuous relations with them while

there is still a possibility they might act against Allende.”<sup>74</sup> The potential for action on the part of the Chilean armed forces was the foremost concern of the NSC, and was listed first, while the possibility that Chile would turn to Moscow for military hardware ranked last.<sup>75</sup> In the end, Kissinger approved granting the Chilean military \$5 million in credit.<sup>76</sup>

This contradiction puzzled Senator J. William Fulbright, the distinguished chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. When the acting assistant secretary of state, John H. Crimmins, testified before the committee, Fulbright observed:

I can only emphasize it seems to me a very ironic thing that you even question the sale of a 707 [Boeing jet] and yet you positively recommended an increase in military sales. It seems a very odd posture for the United States to be in of even having doubts about giving Chile the right to buy on the usual terms, with the Export Bank which was established for this purpose, a civilian transport which I am sure Boeing is most anxious to sell, and then without any hesitation apparently recommending a \$6 million increase in the military sales. This just seems utterly inconsistent to what I thought was our policy.<sup>77</sup>

The arms sales and the financial quarantine would work in tandem, letting the Chilean officers understand that they could only benefit from a change in government. Although Washington had successfully estranged itself from the Chilean government, it maintained close contact with the Chilean military. Kissinger laughingly complained to Nixon: “The funny thing is that they have twisted your instruction to keep contact with the military into relaying it where we do more for the Chilean military than for any other military in Latin America. We have more admirals and generals in Chile than in Brazil.”<sup>78</sup>

Obviously, Kissinger was referring to *Chilean* admirals and generals. The national security advisor as well as the president wished to keep their operation against Allende as low-key as possible. The presence of U.S. military officers of the highest rank in Chile would attract too much attention. Still, it is clear that the Nixon administration needed lower-ranking representatives of the U.S. military to maintain good relations with those Chilean admirals and generals.

Along with the attaché personnel at the U.S. embassies throughout Latin America, the Department of Defense assigned officers to a liaison service known as Milgroup. Charles A. Meyer, chairman of Interdepartmental Group for Inter-American Affairs, stressed the necessity of upgrading the qualifications of these personnel. Linguistic ability and a good education were imperatives.<sup>79</sup> In addition, Meyer recommended to Kissinger that “the

freeze on further implementation of the MILGP study be lifted and that a new level of not to exceed 290 U.S. military spaces for the region be approved, leaving the detailed breakdown of each MILGP to be worked out among the Ambassadors, USCINCSO and Washington. In deciding upon the new levels for individual posts, the IG/ARA will oppose any increases that are not demonstrably contributive to the objective of increasing U.S. influence.”<sup>80</sup>

For Chile, the IG/ARA favored the presence of thirteen Milgroup personnel.<sup>81</sup> Given the fixation of the White House on Allende, it is probable that this recommendation was fulfilled if not exceeded. Later, after the coup, the conduct of one Milgroup representative during the disappearance of an American expatriate, Charles Horman, would generate much suspicion.

Continuation of aid to the Chilean armed forces would prove effective, but Nixon understood that he could not accomplish his agenda without the CIA. The exposure of U.S. intelligence’s shady dealings made this a precarious time for the Agency, but it still kept the president’s trust. “I will not embarrass the CIA,” Nixon insisted. “I will defend it.”<sup>82</sup> His mind totally justified the covert operations in Iran, Guatemala, and Cuba that had been authorized by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The resulting bloodshed had never tortured his conscience during his vice presidency, nor did the memory of it ever give him pause as he plotted Allende’s destruction. “We did the Chilean things and we did a few other things and by God we won’t need to do some more,” Nixon admitted in the privacy of the Oval Office.<sup>83</sup> The National Archives has only recently declassified this last comment. Probably it was a reference to the aborted abduction of General Schneider.

Indifferent to the ugly consequences of Track II, the Nixon administration sanctioned continued contact between the CIA and the Chilean military. By this point, the prospects for a coup were not promising. Save for the cashiered Viaux and other officers on the fringe, the Chilean armed forces subordinated itself to civilian authority. “The Schneider assassination, and the repercussions, thereof, was a demoralizing development for the military and effectively braked whatever sentiment was developing for military action to prevent Allende’s assumption of power,” the Santiago station reported to the CIA director.<sup>84</sup> Still, the station remained hopeful as it forecast the long scheme of things: “The Chilean military probably would not oppose Allende, or, if developments should so dictate, plot his overthrow unless they were ignited by a political x opposition force with strong civilian support.”<sup>85</sup>

Washington did not really care what political party presented the main challenge to the UP coalition, just as long as such a challenge existed. “Since the PDC may well be the largest party in Chile and therefore the most sig-

nificant opposition force in the country, it merits the fullest possible support," the station argued.<sup>86</sup> Desperate that the Christian Democrats make a solid challenge in the municipal election in April of 1971, the 40 Committee extended substantial sums to the party. Since significant portions of the relevant documents are still blacked out, it is not absolutely clear how much money the Christian Democratic party received. A memorandum from the CIA chief of the Western Hemisphere Division mentioned that the 40 Committee had approved a total \$1,240,000 for more than one opposition party, including the right-wing National party.<sup>87</sup> Another heavily censored cable from the Santiago station mentioned a contribution of \$1,182,000 for fiscal year 1971.<sup>88</sup> Because the entire uncensored portion of the cable is devoted solely to the subject of the Christian Democrats, one can safely assume that their party received that amount.

If the socialist experiment in Chile had failed from the beginning, it is unlikely that its opposition would have required so much financial support from abroad. The Christian Democratic party was particularly weak. "It cannot carry out an opposition program based solely on the contributions from its party members or interested businessmen," the Santiago station acknowledged.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, the notoriously right-wing newspaper, *El Mercurio*, attracted Washington's attention. On September 14, Kissinger called CIA Director Richard Helms to inform him that "the President had just approved the proposal for supporting 'El Mercurio' in the amount of \$700,000 . . . and wished to see the paper kept going and the amount stipulated could be exceed if it would usefully serve that purpose."<sup>90</sup> The weakness of Allende's opposition was an indication of his own political strength.

In the municipal election, the Christian Democrats won 25.6 percent of the vote. While that may not seem impressive, the CIA congratulated itself for providing the support essential for the propaganda and press campaign.<sup>91</sup> None of the documents indicated any expectation of an actual Christian Democratic victory. Apparently, what mattered was that the Christian Democrats remained a "leading opposition force to the Allende regime."<sup>92</sup> This brings us back to the Santiago station's prediction that the Chilean armed forces would not act "unless they were ignited by a political x opposition force with strong civilian support."<sup>93</sup> This did not necessarily mean a political opposition force that enjoyed majority support from the people; just a certain sector of Chilean society in collaboration with the military would suffice.

For the CIA, cultivating contacts within the Chilean military mattered far more than financing the opposition parties. Two years before the fall of Allende, the Agency set its sights on General Augusto Pinochet, the commander of the Santiago garrison. Oddly enough, the man who would later

bear direct responsibility for the murder of thousands made little impression on Allende's circle. CODELCO's Arrate did not think Pinochet carried the weight of other Chilean generals:

He was very servile . . . and he was a very obscure military man. The army had some very brilliant generals. Schneider, who was assassinated in 1970, was a very brilliant military man. And [General Carlos] Prats was a real intellectual . . . a man of a very high level of culture . . . who liked to write. Pinochet was the typical guy that was there and reached the position of general not menacing anybody and very obscure. I don't know really, why it took so long for him to [overthrow Allende] . . . probably because he wanted to act with no risks."<sup>94</sup>

Arrate remembered that Pinochet behaved in a sycophantic manner with General Prats, whom he later had killed. With great retrospective irony, the future tyrant of the right escorted Cuban leader Fidel Castro on his 1971 visit to Chile. "There are nice photographs of Pinochet with Castro," Arrate said.<sup>95</sup> This visit, of course, gave Washington another reason to hate Allende. U.S. policymakers feared that the Organization of American States, a deliberative body under Washington's unofficial control, would soon embrace Cuba. "Chile is leading the drive and Peru has the question of 'normalized' relations under active consideration," Charles A. Meyer informed Kissinger. "Chances are increasing that within eighteen months a majority of the OAS members will favor revision of OAS policy toward Cuba."<sup>96</sup>

As much as Pinochet and other disloyal generals probably despised Castro, and resented Allende's warm relationship with him, the CIA was having difficulty finding prospective leaders angry enough to stage a successful coup. The station in Santiago reported that "Pinochet would favor but would want to close eyes to events."<sup>97</sup> Yet the Agency seemed to sense some fascist potential in Pinochet. In an account of a dinner on August 5, the station observed that Pinochet "[censored portion] avoided making comments which would reveal his inner thoughts. This completely consistent with his known pattern: he is cautious and quiet on political subjects. Nevertheless his wife seconded comment by other guests to effect that government was getting in deep water with its present orientation."<sup>98</sup>

Although ideologically opposed to Allende, Pinochet was a curiously passive character. He was not an independent personality. He required the inspiration and even the permission of authority figures before he could act. Now, military and intelligence agents from Washington would become the authority figures. Interestingly, the other potential plotters seemed just as lacking in initiative. Colonel Paul Wimert, a U.S. military attaché and veteran of the Schneider affair, surely was annoyed after speaking with a

Chilean army contact. “He stated that the young officers (i.e. Lts and Capts) have organized themselves and have a plan to take control of the government,” Wimert reported. “The drawback, however, is that they are lacking a leader – a recurring theme in discussions such as this.”<sup>99</sup>

Clearly, Washington directed this sordid drama. U.S. policymakers wanted a coup, even if they opposed any premature action. When the Santiago station reported that some Chilean military officers planned a putsch for the spring of 1972, it was full of enthusiasm.<sup>100</sup> In its eagerness, the station offered many recommendations: “Choose one or two [censored] with whom we can talk frankly about the mechanics of a coup to be sure all significant aspects are thought through. Our input would be based on our own analysis of what tasks are necessary to ensure the coup would be successful.”<sup>101</sup>

Kissinger was on the list of distribution for the reported plan for 1972, so he probably contributed to the response from CIA Headquarters, which was quite sharp: “There is of course a rather fine dividing line between merely ‘listening’ and ‘talking frankly about the mechanics of a coup’ which in the long run must be left to the discretion and good judgment of the individual case officer. Please err on the side of giving the possibly indiscreet and probably uncontrolled contact little tangible material with which to accuse us.”<sup>102</sup>

Above all, Washington feared the exposure that would result from a hasty move. Opposition to civilian rule was not strong enough within the Chilean military at this point. The Agency’s Western Hemisphere Division effectively scolded the Santiago station: “If and when Station reporting indicates a favorable political atmosphere and a serious military intent to take action against the Allende government, it will become the responsibility of other appropriate [censored] authorities to use this intelligence in reaching a policy decision.”<sup>103</sup>

As the Nixon administration obsessively schemed, the Allende administration strove to improve the lives of the Chilean people. Specifically, the Chilean government planned to empower the workers by empowering itself. “State control is projected to destroy the entire economic base of imperialism and class domination by putting an end to private ownership of the means of production,” pronounced the new minister of economics, Pedro Vuskovic.<sup>104</sup>

The Allende scheme, of course, offered a place for private enterprise, but the Chilean government did not stop with its takeover of the copper and communications industries. The regime also expropriated the top industrial companies, banking and distribution systems, and Chile’s other important raw materials such as nitrates, coal, iron, and steel. Eventually, the UP government would nationalize 30 percent of Chilean industry.<sup>105</sup>

Nevertheless, Allende's policy of expropriation was neither arbitrary nor heavy-handed. The Chilean president relied on legal precedent for the most part. For example, when a terrified Ralston-Purina shut down all operations in Chile upon Allende's election, he relied on a law from 1943 to take control and save Chilean jobs. When it came to the Yarur textile factory, Allende turned to a decree from 1953 that permitted the Chilean president to seize closed factories that produced products key to the national economy.<sup>106</sup>

This new public wealth allowed more public spending for social welfare. The allotment of a half a liter of milk for every youngster, for example, was especially important in a country where malnutrition destined more than half a million children to physical and mental retardation.<sup>107</sup> Since the Chilean president was a medical man, it was perhaps inevitable that his government would socialize the national health care system.<sup>108</sup> Thanks to state subsidies, the common Chilean people now enjoyed greater access to public utilities. The real rate for electricity dropped by 85 percent, and the cost of telephone service decreased by 33 percent.<sup>109</sup>

Allende's attack on U.S. economic imperialism was important, but his redistribution of wealth within Chilean society mattered just as much. Agrarian reform drastically surpassed the program of the previous administration. The Frei government had legalized unionization of the rural labor force, but the Allende government ensured that 1971 would see an 82 percent jump in union membership. A new law restricted large estates from holding more than eighty hectares of land.<sup>110</sup> As a result of this new legislation, Allende confiscated almost as many *latifundia* in 1971 as Frei did during his entire six years in office.<sup>111</sup> This land was destined for peasant cooperatives.<sup>112</sup> Nevertheless, the UP government did not seize these estates in a lawless fit of revolutionary fervor. For instance, when a country gentleman and his sons fired their guns at peasants who had taken over their property, Allende responded with justice as well as promptness. In contrast to Frei, who would have charged the peasants with criminal trespass, Allende could appreciate history. The peasants, who were Mapuche Indians, had been defrauded of that very land three decades before. Therefore, Allende sided with the peasants.<sup>113</sup>

As with the expropriation of the copper mines, the agrarian reform established a fair system of compensation. Under this system, the dispossessed landowners received reimbursement mostly in the form of thirty-year bonds. In spite of this compensation, the wealthy planters must have been angry and fearful, for the agrarian reform begun by Frei and continued by his successor would ultimately cost them \$1 billion.<sup>114</sup>

Ironically, while Allende helped improve the lives of the Chilean peasantry, he earned enmity from the left as well as the right for his agrarian pol-

icy. MIR tried to assume control of the policy by seizing large estates on its own. Accusing Allende of not moving fast enough, the MIR criticized the official agricultural agenda as “a bourgeois law that does not contribute to the improvement of the standard of living of the peasantry.”<sup>115</sup> Despite MIR’s criticism, rural support for the UP actually rose.<sup>116</sup> When asked to comment on Chile’s new leader, one member of MIR had this to say: “That depends on which Allende you mean. Allende the man we like and respect. Allende the President of Chile, we are not sure.”<sup>117</sup> Chances are that MIR would have opposed Allende no matter what his policy. They favored social transformation outside the established system. MIR had provided Allende critical support, but he had his own agenda. From the beginning, the conflict was a matter of style and values. When Allende began his administration, he rejected the request of the extreme left to reside in the squalid section of Santiago. As much as he sympathized with Chile’s poor, Allende was markedly bourgeois in his personal tastes, with an appreciation for the finer things in life. He was not about to go slumming as a sign of solidarity.<sup>118</sup>

In any case, Allende encountered much fiercer opposition from the right. Wage increases for blue-collar workers undoubtedly enraged their wealthy employers. The UP government sought to correct the disparity in the minimum wages between blue-collar and white-collar workers. By guaranteeing the blue-collar sector a 39 percent pay raise as opposed to 10 percent for the white-collar one, Chilean economist Patricio Meller found, “the differential between minimum wages for white- and blue-collar workers narrowed from 49 percent (1970) to 35 percent in 1971.”<sup>119</sup> While this may seem unfair on paper, the purchasing power of both groups increased almost equally, giving all workers a greater portion of Chile’s gross domestic product.<sup>120</sup>

By the end of his first year in office, Allende felt unabashed yet justified pride. He had fulfilled most of his campaign promises. The Chilean president declared to his people: “We control 90 percent of what were the private banks . . . more than seventy strategic and monopolistic enterprises have been expropriated, intervened, requisitioned or acquired by the state. We are owners! We are able to say: our copper, our coal, our iron, our nitrates, our steel; the fundamental bases of heavy industry today belong to Chile and the Chileans.”<sup>121</sup>

If Allende fulfilled many of his promises to the Chilean people, some aspects of the UP program did not work according to plan. The radical redistribution of income under Allende allowed working-class people to buy more than they ever had before. For the first time, the destitute of Chile added meat to their diets and now wore clothes instead of rags.<sup>122</sup> The dramatic rise in

purchases of food and electrical appliances such as refrigerators and television sets boosted the amount of currency in circulation. For the first time, the workers had a taste of the good life, but that taste came with the price of inflation. The boost in state spending by 70 percent in 1971, also significantly contributed to the problem. While this governmental investment stimulated the economy, sharply reducing unemployment, it also required a great deal of credit. As a result, the government simply produced more money. Incredibly, Chile had more than twice as much money in circulation in 1971 than in 1970.<sup>123</sup> "In this sense, I think the economic policy of the Allende government had a weakness," conceded Arrate, an ardent UP partisan. "And I think the policymakers by the time did not deal adequately with this problem."<sup>124</sup>

Chile's economic troubles would worsen over the next two years, and the credit blockade deserves much of the blame. It is depressing now to speculate how far Allende could have guided his country's development with adequate financial support. Perhaps foreign credit, as well as unimpeded trade overseas, would have enabled Chile to better cope with inflation and other problems. While the White House arranged for Chile's destruction, a few North Americans could envision a humane policy alternative. A leading critic of the Nixon administration, Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, declared Chile had a right to determine its own political future. In particular, the senator resented the administration's discriminatory economic policies. "Those nations actively seeking to bring about social justice and political freedom are the nations whose efforts deserve our most generous bilateral assistance," Kennedy declared.<sup>125</sup> Indeed, the senator raised a valid and easily defensible point.

For its part, the Nixon administration used the Hickenlooper Amendment to justify the suspension of assistance to Chile.<sup>126</sup> Perhaps Washington interpreted the amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act too rigidly. The Hickenlooper Amendment required suspension of aid only if the expropriating nation "is not contrary to international law . . . or in any case with respect to which the President determines that application of the act of state doctrine is required in that particular case by the foreign policy interests of the United States and a suggestion to this effect is filed on his behalf in that case with the court."<sup>127</sup>

The Hickenlooper Amendment, therefore, did not bind Nixon absolutely. He could have taken a more compassionate course by conceding that Frei's Chileanization program had already overcompensated the copper companies. At the very least, the realm of international law has ample room for arbitration and compromise. The Allende administration was open to this; the Nixon administration was not.

In any case, Kennedy could see that the Exim Bank's abrupt rejection of the Chilean had backfired in many ways: "Now we find the government of Chile negotiating with the Soviet Union for those jets."<sup>128</sup> The senator challenged the illusion that corporate interests in Latin America coincided with the interests of the American people. "Private investment must come to terms with a changed environment, an environment dominated by the force of nationalism," Kennedy continued.<sup>129</sup> Unfortunately, Nixon lacked the insight of the progressive senator. As 1971 moved into 1972, the president preferred to maintain his own biased image of Latin America rather than accept its reality.

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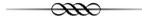
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129. Address by Senator Kennedy.

## CHAPTER FIVE



# Allende's Fall: 1972–1973

More than anything, Kissinger and his staff feared the Chilean experiment as a potential inspiration for the rest of the hemisphere. As the Nixon administration faced the prospect of losing its inherited but needlessly protracted campaign in Vietnam, it could not accept failure in Latin America. “Its relative importance to us will grow rather than diminish as our commitments in other parts of the world decline,” Nixon advisor Robert Finch wrote in a memorandum.<sup>1</sup> Damage to American “credibility” was simply unacceptable.

In the long twilight of the Cold War, Kissinger and other members of the administration often publicly linked the Allende presidency to Cuban and Soviet infiltration. To be sure, Allende and Castro enjoyed an ideological and personal rapport, dreaming the same dream of a Latin America free of U.S. domination. One indication of the closeness between Santiago and Havana was the wedding of Allende’s daughter, Beatriz, to Luis Fernandez Oña, who became the second most important man at the Cuban embassy. “Since Allende’s inauguration, the Cuban official presence has burgeoned from zero to 54 personnel,” the CIA noted. “Almost one-third of these Cuban officials belong to the Cuban Intelligence Service and the so-called Directorate of Liberation.” Allende’s son-in-law, who had helped found the *Grupo de Amigos Personales*, was one of these intelligence officers.<sup>2</sup>

U.S. intelligence was also disturbed because the Chilean president made his nation a refuge for other Latin American radicals.<sup>3</sup> Because of this, the White House feared Allende would support actively subversive activities in other Latin American countries. “In the face of this threat *we should upgrade*

*our own intelligence and security liaison activities* with the emphasis on improved quality rather than great numbers,” Finch insisted.<sup>4</sup>

Obviously, neither Allende nor Castro could have forced other Latin American nations to rise up against U.S. imperialism. Any rebels who might have fled to Chile had their own reasons of opposing their governments. As in Vietnam, movements of national liberation in Latin America were home-grown, indigenous to those particular countries. Washington, of course, did not pause to consider the legitimate grievances of these Latin American revolutionaries. In any case, Cuba regarded Allende’s Chile as too fragile to support any movement of national liberation, much less its own. “The Cubans are convinced that Allende will be overthrown by a military or subversive coup before the end of his term of office,” the CIA reported to Kissinger, questioning whether Castro would even help the Chilean president when the time came.<sup>5</sup> The Agency believed that the Cuban leader would, at most, offer counsel and moral support. “Cuba does not consider Chile a stable or permanent base from which to export the revolution to the rest of Latin America,” the CIA concluded.<sup>6</sup> In reality, Cuban intelligence operations in Chile gave U.S. intelligence little reason to worry: “Havana has been circumspect about trying to use Chile as a base for promoting revolutionary movements elsewhere in Latin America, partly so as to not add to Allende’s problems and partly so as not to jeopardize the advantages offered by the Cuban presence in Santiago. Cuban officials in Chile are now involved in assisting Latin American revolutionaries exiled in or transiting through Chile, but on a fairly modest scale.”<sup>7</sup>

The scale of Cuban involvement in Chile would indeed be modest, particularly when compared to the scale of other Cuban investments overseas. One of Castro’s most policies was his dispatch of 36,000 troops to the African nation of Angola in 1975. By contrast, at the time of Allende’s fall in September of 1973, there were fewer than 150 Cuban agents in Chile.<sup>8</sup>

In the end, the Allende regime was simply too conservative for either Castro or his patron, the Soviet Union. “Like Castro, Soviets probably do not believe in the UP strategy of achieving socialism in a consumption economy,” wrote Nathaniel Davis, Ambassador Korry’s recent replacement, in a dispatch home.<sup>9</sup> The Chilean president lacked the ruthlessness typical of leaders in the Communist bloc. “Soviet and Eastern European ambassadors make no secret to me of their conviction that ‘Chileans do not like to work,’” Davis continued.<sup>10</sup>

At the same time the Kremlin offered the Allende government moral and political support, it held itself back. Moscow shared Havana’s skepticism about the survival of Socialist Chile. It also feared vexing Washington at this

time of détente. “To be sure, Moscow expresses *pro forma* sympathy and support for Chile’s struggle to achieve ‘independence’ and implement ‘progressive’ changes,” the CIA observed, “but references to the UP striving to achieve socialism are scrupulously avoided.”<sup>11</sup>

By this time, Chile fully felt the effect of the Washington-imposed economic blockade. Ideology compelled the Soviet Union to help. Expanding the original offer of credit made to the Frei administration, in 1972 the Soviets extended an offer of \$97 million for industrial purchases. They also made available an unconditional \$37 million in bank credit.<sup>12</sup> Communist China also offered \$65 million in credit to cover a five-year period. This modest assistance could hardly solve the Chilean impasse. As a Senior Review Group memorandum to Kissinger noted, “Regardless of the settlement arrived at by the Paris Club [an economic summit] Allende likely faces economic disaster in another 12 to 18 months—unless, of course, the Russians and Chinese undertake a massive bail-out operation. They seem reluctant in that direction. Moscow certainly does not want another Cuban rat-hole. A very tough settlement at Paris—along the lines we originally sought—would maximize the pressure on Allende and hasten economic collapse.”<sup>13</sup>

Still, the Soviets did agree to buy 130,000 tons of Chilean copper in July of 1972, and also to spend \$87 million on copper wares. Four months later, Moscow extended \$103 million more in credits.<sup>14</sup> Even when the Chilean economy was in dire straits at the very end, the Kremlin offered little. “Soviet aid in 1973 was marginal; building a fishing institute and a fishing port at Colcura, expanding the Topcopilla Electric Plant, and constructing a wheat mill in Valparaíso,” scholars Joseph L. Noguee and John W. Sloan wrote.<sup>15</sup>

In any case, Allende had his own reasons for not tightly embracing the Communist powers. A substantial sector of the Chilean electorate opposed close ties with the Soviet Union and China. Allende followed the principles of the non-aligned movement, and he wished to maintain Chile’s independence. He also hoped to rely on Western nations for trade, credits, and technical know-how. “The difficulties inherent in forging new economic links between Chile and the Communist nations are manifested in Allende’s slowness in utilizing the nearly \$90 million in long-term credits proffered by the USSR over the years,” the CIA observed.<sup>16</sup> In addition, Allende also had to consider the effect of such an arrangement on the rest of Latin America. “In any event, it would complicate his relationship with neighboring countries, which the USSR, PRC, and GOC would all prefer to avoid,” the Senior Review Group found.<sup>17</sup>

Aversion to conflict did not prevent the Soviet Union from extending a proposal of \$300 million in credits for the Chilean armed forces in 1972.

“Thus far, the military have resisted all blandishments as well as strong pressures from Allende on this issue,” the CIA noted.<sup>18</sup> In order to avoid Soviet instruction, the military rejected any highly technologically complex armaments.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, the military did agree to make plans for a mission to the Soviet Union in June.<sup>20</sup> “They apparently are not as resistant to accepting less sophisticated equipment from Moscow that would not require Soviet advisors or extensive training,” the CIA found.<sup>21</sup> At this time, a delegation of the Chilean Air Force visited the Soviet Union for technical information on MIG jets, which was hardly an indication of a major Soviet effort to uplift the Chilean military.<sup>22</sup>

Even if Allende had wanted to turn Chile into a Soviet satellite, his armed forces would not have let him. Indeed, the best way for Kissinger to keep the Chilean military independent of Soviet influence probably would have been to protect General Schneider. In any case, Allende did not wish to alienate the U.S. military. “He is anxious to maintain access to U.S. equipment and spare parts, and to keep U.S. credit channels open,” the CIA’s National Intelligence Estimate stated.<sup>23</sup> In fact, Allende heartily approved the joint maneuvers of the U.S. and Chilean navies.<sup>24</sup> One should also question why the Soviets waited so long to make such a generous offer. Through their own intelligence, the Soviets undoubtedly knew of their rival superpower’s campaign to destabilize Allende. One might make the case that Moscow offered \$300 million in military credits as a means for Allende’s self-defense.

Just as U.S. aggression drove Castro into the Soviet camp, Allende was forced to look eastward for support. This did not mean that he favored an escalation of tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. Indeed, the Chilean government looked upon *détente* favorably, and its urbane representative in Washington, Ambassador Orlando Letelier, reflected this view after the signing of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty. In a dispatch to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Santiago, Letelier expressed the hope that SALT would divert the greatest resources of the superpowers to peaceful ends. The Chilean diplomat also applauded SALT because it was “a formal recognition that both parties did not need to continue its armament spiral since it would not be fundamental to the real interests of such countries.”<sup>25</sup>

As strained as the Chilean economy was, Washington could still privately acknowledge Allende’s successes. “Growth rate under Allende is around 7 percent, twice the rate of the previous administration,” a CIA document stated in 1972. “Unemployment has been drastically reduced.”<sup>26</sup> Rather than impressing the Nixon administration, these statistics seemed to make it more determined to prevent the Chilean experiment from working.

The best way of ruining the Chilean economy was to deprive it of badly needed credit. As a Third World country, Chile had saved little and lacked internal sources of investment. Instead, it had relied on loans from wealthier nations such as the United States in order to finance its own development. Burdened by debts left over from the Alessandri and Frei administrations, Chile stagnated economically.<sup>27</sup> The foreign debt, which amounted to more than \$4 billion, in fact, drained the nation of over 30 percent of all its export earnings.<sup>28</sup> In consequence, Chile's foreign exchange reserves declined.<sup>29</sup> The low supply of foreign currency made the purchase of desperately needed imports far more difficult.<sup>30</sup> Even the boost in agricultural production could not meet the demands of a hungry and increasingly demanding Chilean populace. As Nogee and Sloan pointed out, "When his regime collapsed, Allende was importing about \$700 million a year in food alone."<sup>31</sup>

Washington took advantage of Chile's economic weaknesses. In particular, the secretary of the treasury saw an opportunity. "It is my understanding that you have made it very clear that we should keep maximum pressure on Chile," Connally reminded the president.<sup>32</sup> Connally wanted to maintain that pressure by denying Chile a chance to renegotiate its enormous foreign debt at the meeting of the Paris Club in February of 1972. The secretary of the treasury wanted the other creditor nations to negotiate with Chile on a multilateral basis. The United States, of course, would lead this international group. "If they were to go off and negotiate separately our leverage could be reduced substantially," Connally advised the president, recommending that his own department lead the U.S. delegation.<sup>33</sup> The Treasury secretary wanted to demolish any Chilean hopes that Washington would renegotiate. "As I understand it, this is not our intention and our principle purpose is to get broad creditor support to isolate Chile," Connally insisted.<sup>34</sup>

Ambassador Davis also favored this strategy, fully cognizant of the damage it would wreak. Davis argued, "There is no foreseeable way in which GOC would be able to finance a level of imports sufficient to fill domestic supply-demand gap, as long as U.S. and Europeans do not pull apart on debt renegotiation, relief will be insufficient to serve Allende's purposes."<sup>35</sup>

This refusal to relieve Chile of its burden of massive debt would help fulfill Washington's ultimate agenda. "Range of acute economic problems—inflation, declining agricultural production, squeeze on imports, difficulties with copper production—will have critical effect on political developments during coming year," Davis predicted.<sup>36</sup>

The Nixon administration found the Chilean terms unreasonable: "The Chileans want a three year consolidation period with relief covering 85 percent of principal *and interest*, a grace period of three years and repayment over

seven additional years with interest at four per cent.”<sup>37</sup> Despite the heavy hand of Washington, the Chileans managed to negotiate with the Western Europeans on a bilateral basis in April. The eventual deals rescheduled 70 percent of the payments that were owed by Chile that year for another three years.<sup>38</sup> Although this agreement must have helped, nearly three-fourths of the \$97 million debt that Chile wished to reschedule had come from the United States.<sup>39</sup> As long as the Chilean government refused to compensate Kennecott and Anaconda for their copper mines, Washington would not budge. In addition to its concern about the copper companies, the Nixon administration was profoundly concerned about the old unpaid loans from Eximbank and the Agency for International Development, both U.S. government organizations. The Overseas Private Insurance Corporation, which insured U.S. corporate investments in foreign countries, was also a government agency that faced heavy loss. In total, the U.S. government risked losing \$1.1 billion.<sup>40</sup>

Whether the U.S. taxpayers should support multinational corporations is a valid subject for debate, but Washington’s credit blockade forced Chile to turn to the Soviets for more help. In early 1972, a Soviet delegation of economic specialists visited Chile. The Chileans asked for \$30 million in annual credits for machinery, and between \$100 and \$200 million in credits for wheat, meat, butter, and other edible commodities. Normally, such credits were provided on a short-term basis, but the Chileans hoped to delay payment until 1976. In exchange, Santiago offered to sell copper, curing salt, iodine, fish, fish flour, and finished goods such as shoes and woolens: “Payment for Chilean exports would be paid in cash and in accepted currency. The Chileans based their position on both the monetary restrictions, as well as political reasons.”<sup>41</sup> At a time when reactionary factions in Chile threatened Allende’s hold on political power, he had to avoid any appearance of collusion. It is likely, however, that Santiago would not have made such an extravagant proposal if the situation had been less desperate.

For its part, the Soviet delegation considered the Chilean requests exorbitant: “The Soviet-Chilean plan for commercial development proposed by the Chileans implies that the Soviet Union would have to accept terms and conditions which have never been encountered in relations between the USSR and developing countries. . . . Meanwhile, it is assumed that the USSR would have to import products, which are of no immediate use, and pay for them immediately in accepted currency.”<sup>42</sup>

Unfortunately for Chile, the parties failed to reach an agreement. Visiting Moscow in December of 1972, Allende tried again. The Chilean president asked the Soviets for a loan of \$100 million as a counterweight to its negative

balance of payments. When Allende offered copper as reimbursement for the credit, the Soviets responded: “And why does the USSR need copper, when we have invested extensively in the copper mines of Siberia and we have sufficient for domestic needs?” Grudgingly, the Soviets would only extend \$40 million.<sup>43</sup>

His hopes for Soviet economic assistance in ruins, Allende knew that his only hope was a resolution of the controversy over the expropriation of the copper mines. Allende suggested settling the dispute by international arbitration. While the Nixon administration claimed to respect the principles and procedures of international arbitration, it dismissed the idea by referring to the 1914 U.S.-Chile Bilateral Treaty for the Advancement of Peace: “The Treaty expressly states that ‘any question that may affect the independence, the honor or the vital interests of either or both of the countries, or the provisions of their respective Constitutions or the interests of a third nation, will not be subjected to such or any other arbitration.’ In view of this obstacle to arbitration of the basic copper issues and the potential for delay, it would be best to consider other arrangements for international adjudication.”<sup>44</sup>

In all probability, Nixon and his advisors avoided international arbitration because they did not have a case. Still, it is ironic that the White House would invoke an old treaty in its opposition to the arbitration proposal. A treaty is a binding contract in international law. Yet, the Nixon administration had shown little respect for the rule of law in Chile as it financed General Schneider’s murder. At any rate, the Nixon administration did not manipulate the Chilean political process because it cared about “the independence, the honor, or the vital interests” of Chile.

In the fall of 1972, U.S. intelligence commenced an operation to influence the Chilean congressional elections that would take place the following March. The CIA station in Santiago found a reliable ally in Ambassador Davis. With the diplomat’s support, the station requested that Washington appropriate \$1,427,666 for the campaign. On a copy of one document relevant to this scheme, the space marked for approval was checked underneath with the following handwritten words: “WH [White House] notified 10/18.”<sup>45</sup>

Obviously, a major portion of this fund went to the UP’s political opposition. Ideologically indiscriminate, the Nixon administration subsidized the centrist Christian Democratic party, the conservative National Party, the Democratic Radical Party, and the Independent Radical Party. The latter two parties had defected from the Radical Party. Unlike the Democratic Radicals, though, the Independent Radicals belonged to the UP coalition. “The Station will also continue its efforts to influence the PIR and will be alert for opportunities for using the PIR to exacerbate tensions within the UP,” the CIA noted.<sup>46</sup>

As with previous donations, the precise amount given to each party is blacked out. Still, information that is withheld on some declassified documents is available on others. Records indicate that the National Party, a faction dominated by wealthy landowners, businessmen, and the bourgeoisie, received \$328,500 for Fiscal Year 1972 under the auspices of the 40 Committee.<sup>47</sup> The Committee also granted the Christian Democrats \$587,000.<sup>48</sup> One can assume the remaining two parties received comparable amounts.

By strengthening the opposition parties in anticipation of the 1973 elections, Washington hoped to ultimately weaken Allende's ability to work with the Chilean Congress. If the opposition parties formed a workable coalition and then won a two-thirds majority in the legislature, they could "override presidential vetos of legislative bills and, if the situation should arise, give them the necessary votes to remove the president by office by impeachment."<sup>49</sup>

The CIA could dream, but it could also realistically estimate Allende's political clout. The Agency could hope for little more than a simple majority. "A 65/35 split would probably yield a two-thirds majority in each house," the State Department noted, "but CIA believes such a result to be highly unlikely."<sup>50</sup> Ambassador Davis offered the same prediction. "The Ambassador indicated that he believes a 60/40 split of the vote in favor of the opposition is a likely outcome for the March elections," the CIA reported.<sup>51</sup> Although Kissinger would later claim that Allende was a threat to Chilean democracy, the U.S. ambassador doubted there would be fraud to any significant degree.

If the Agency did not expect to reverse the Allende experiment through electoral means, why did it bother to subsidize the political opposition? One must take another look at the relevant documents. In collaboration with Ambassador Davis, the CIA had requested financial assistance for the private sector.<sup>52</sup> This support exploited the economic situation in Chile, which Washington had helped bring about in the first place. Facing a worsening economic situation, a sector of the bourgeoisie went on strike. Allende's radical policies had had no detrimental effect on the living standard of the middle class, but it felt the impact of shortages.

Thanks to the currency shortage, which existed because of Washington's credit blockade, the bourgeoisie could no longer buy the imported goods it enjoyed so much.<sup>53</sup> Professionals such as doctors openly expressed their desire that the Chilean president step down.

Conservative women also participated enthusiastically in demonstrations, with the full backing of the Christian Democrats and the National Party. Their most famous protest, the March of the Empty Pots and Pans, took place on December 1, 1971, in Santiago. The privileged marchers brought along their pots and pans to symbolize their alleged hunger. Representatives

from the conservative parties accompanied the women, as did an escort of *Patria y Libertad*, the paramilitary group notorious for its involvement in the 1970 murder of General Schneider.<sup>54</sup> As the women made their way from the Plaza Italia toward their intended target of *La Casa Moneda*, the presidential palace, they repeated slogans intended to associate Allende with the primitive stereotypes of Communism:

Allende, listen, we women are many!  
 ¡Chile *si!* ¡Cuba *no!*  
 Dungeon, dungeon, Fidel go home! [Castro was visiting at the time.]  
 There's no meat—smoke a Havana!  
 The left has left *us* without food!  
 There's not meat in the pot, and the government looks the other way!<sup>55</sup>

The protest never made it to *La Moneda*. Very soon, fighting broke out between the conservative male escorts and young male members of the UP. By the time the marchers reached a park called Cerro Santa Lucía, the police were waiting with tear gas and water. The March of the Empty Pots and Pans ended ignominiously by leaving over one hundred people, mostly male, injured.<sup>56</sup>

The March of the Empty Pots and Pans was intended to create the impression *all* Chilean women opposed Allende. Even though some working-class women took part in the original March, ladies of privilege had been the principal organizers.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, the copycat demonstrations that immediately followed the disrupted march took place in Providencia, an affluent area of the city, before spreading over the rest of Chile.<sup>58</sup> The poor women who did protest in the pot-and-pan demonstrations had actually suffered the privations to which their wealthy counterparts had only pretended. Many years later, the veterans of these protests wondered if the upper class had not manipulated them. After all, many of the shortages and the accompanying long lines were the direct result of the machinations of Washington and the Chilean social elite.<sup>59</sup>

For example, the engagement of the truck industry owners in strikes in the fall of 1972 and the summer of 1973 had a devastating impact because Chile lacked an extensive railway system. By stopping the delivery of vitally needed goods such as food, the economy came to a standstill. The striking truckers needed to live on something, however: “A reporter asked a group of truckers who were camping and dining on ‘a lavish communal meal of steak, vegetables, wine and empanadas’ where the money came from. ‘From the CIA,’ they answered laughingly.”<sup>60</sup>

Kissinger even admitted in his memoir that the CIA had contributed \$2,800 to the truckers, but it is hard to believe that U.S. intelligence did not provide far more than that.<sup>61</sup> How else could the idle truckers have lived so well for so long? Tellingly, weapons of U.S. manufacture were even found in the truckers' headquarters. Corporate America had not abandoned the fight, either. ITT extended \$400,000 to the strikers.<sup>62</sup>

The blue-collar employees of the copper mines also joined the economic resistance. When the workers at El Teniente wanted another pay raise to meet inflation, the Chilean government rejected the request in an effort to keep the currency depreciation under control. In any case, the income of the copper miners was already several times more than the minimum wage. In his policy of wealth redistribution, Allende had gravely erred by enriching the lower classes while failing to require sacrifices from their social superiors. With the exception of a very privileged few who possessed the most extreme wealth, all Chileans by October of 1972 enjoyed wages and salaries that were 99.8 percent higher than the year before. Surely the bourgeoisie did not urgently require further enhancement of their affluence. Yet this specific policy, which was well-intended and designed to assist the impoverished bulk of the population, hurt the Chilean economy as it coped with an international blockade at the very end. Further shortages and inflation followed.<sup>63</sup>

Therefore, the strike at El Teniente attracted many supporters. The strike, which began on April 18, 1973, cost Chile more than \$1 million a day, further impeding an already crippled industry. By this point, the centrist Christian Democrats shared a common cause with the rightist National Party and *Patria y Libertad*. All three groups supported the strike. The workers from Chuquicamata engaged in a sympathy strike, attracting several thousand students. Unrest resulted in Santiago, leaving two dead and more than fifty people hurt.<sup>64</sup>

Strikes grew epidemically as democracy approached its end in Chile. In 1969, when Frei was still president, the economy sustained 977 strikes. By contrast, Allende had to cope with 3,287 work stoppages in 1972. This astronomical statistic merely followed a 170 percent increase in strikes in 1970–1971.<sup>65</sup>

U.S. intelligence reveled in the economic chaos, expecting much to come from it. "The situation as it has developed in the past 24 hours has undoubtedly put pressure on the Chilean military, and the outbreak of violence and a successful commercial strike will add to that pressure," the CIA reported on October 12.<sup>66</sup> To the probable disappointment of U.S. intelligence, this pressure did not suffice. The Agency realized that it needed more time to induce

the Chilean armed forces to act: “This conclusion was based on the estimate that the country would have to suffer a little more under Allende before the kind of consensus which would provoke the military into deciding on a coup would be reached among the main elements of the opposition—hat is, the military, the political parties, and the private sector.”<sup>67</sup>

This is precisely what happened. Political scientist Edy Kaufman speculated that the striking bourgeoisie had the most decisive impact on the Chilean armed forces: “While the upper class’ open confrontation with the Allende regime from its very beginnings probably did not surprise the military, the active and gradual involvement of middle-class *gremios* [professional organizations]—increasing existing chaos and augmenting a perception of growing popular discontent, to the point of publicly asking for the resignation or overthrow of the president—may have been critical in forcing a decision of the military officers, who were vacillating between lack of action and participation in the inevitable coup.”<sup>68</sup>

Indeed, the unrest cost Allende the support of Chile’s centrist faction, the Christian Democratic party. Besides the economic uncertainty, the PDC was displeased with Allende’s inability to contain groups on the extreme left. Groups such as the MIR, and *Movimiento de Accion Popular Unitario* (Popular Unity Action Movement), or MAPU, took expropriation of urban factories and large rural estates far beyond where the Allende government cared to go.<sup>69</sup>

Favoring a Cuban style rebellion, MIR particularly did not share Allende’s respect for the conservatives’ entitlement to political expression. When anti-UP groups planned a demonstration in Concepción in the fall of 1972, MIR and some UP partisans tried to stop it. The police stepped in, and the death of a radical student followed.<sup>70</sup> Allende who truly believed in the peaceful functioning of democracy, would not tolerate lawless violence even from the left. Months before the incident in Concepción, Allende had said, “I am one of those that is horrified when I hear certain people affirming irresponsibly that we are close to a civil war. Although we would win a civil war—and we would have to win it, the Chilean economy, human co-existence, and human respect would be affected for generations.”<sup>71</sup>

Uninspired by Allende’s attitude, extreme leftists in Santiago were outraged, chanting “Reformism opens the door to fascism” and “Down with the politics of conciliation.”<sup>72</sup> They intuitively understood that the right wing exercised their democratic rights as the means to the end of undermining Chilean democracy. Remarkably, Allende could tolerate criticism to the point of libel from both political extremes. His respect for free expression and democratic procedures was that great. Rather than violently purging the

MIR, the Chilean president traveled to Concepcion to engage them in a debate. If Allende, with all his logic and shrewdness, could not dissuade them from the activities, it was only because they understood how violent the repression from the right would eventually be.<sup>73</sup>

Foreseeing a right-wing coup against the Chilean government, Havana provided MIR with philosophical and material support. Castro explained that “the Chileans would not be able to stay where they were,” as a constitutional democracy, if they wanted to continue their socialist experiment. Once tensions between MIR and Allende approached the crisis point, however, Cuba took the Chilean president’s side. Cuban Deputy Prime Minister Carlos Rafael Rodriguez scolded the more radical members of Allende’s Socialist party who sympathized with the MIR. “There is no revolutionary alternative to the Popular Unity government and President Allende,” the Cuban deputy prime minister said, insisting that proposing “policies that divide the working and popular forces that Socialists and Communists guide together, is not to open path towards a deeper revolution, but to open breaches where the enemy can penetrate.”<sup>74</sup>

Furthermore, Havana promised Allende to cease the provision of weaponry to MIR. The Cuban training of MIR militants would continue, but Cuban arms would only be contributed in the event of a Chilean coup.<sup>75</sup> Perhaps Castro was more willing to accommodate the Allende government with this matter because his relationship with Moscow meant more to him than violent revolution in Chile, or the rest of Latin America. By this point, Cuba had joined the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, an economic alliance led by the Soviet Union.<sup>76</sup>

Besides the radical Cubans, MIR had managed to alienate more conservative Chileans at home. Previously, the Christian Democrats saw that it was in their own interest to work with the UP coalition and make compromises. Now, MIR reflected poorly on the Allende government as it struggled with Chile’s economic difficulties. The PDC’s right wing had its heart set on the 1976 presidential election. What could possibly be gained from working Allende at such a turbulent time?<sup>77</sup> Eventually, the Christian Democrats came to favor a military coup as a means of restoring order. On August 22, the Christian Democrats helped guide a “Sense of the House” resolution through the Chamber of Deputies that declared the Allende regime unconstitutional, further diminishing its legitimacy to military eyes.<sup>78</sup> Of course, the Christian Democrats expected the military to swiftly transfer power to them. A dictatorship lasting seventeen years would have been unthinkable.

In sum, U.S. intelligence anticipated that the Chilean officers would soon make a move. By the summer of 1972, the CIA now viewed General

Augusto Pinochet as a potential leader. One record described Pinochet as “involved with coup preparations of General Alfredo Canales Marquez Army Chief of Staff.”<sup>79</sup>

Many in Chile had regarded Pinochet as a non-entity, but he now emerged as a potent figure. As the CIA observed, “Pinochet, previously the strict constitutionalist, reluctantly admitted he now harboring second thoughts: that Allende must be forced to step down or be eliminated (“only alternatives”). Pinochet . . . believes Prats leading candidate to head new govt but admits that if coup is led by younger officers (far out possibility), Prats won’t have chance because he too closely identified with Allende.”<sup>80</sup>

Like the late General Schneider, General Carlos Prats believed in the subordination of the military to civilian authority. As the chief-of-staff of the Chilean Army, Prats stood in the way of Pinochet and the other mutinous officers. Pinochet, therefore, worked around Prats as he cultivated the U.S. military. Pinochet made a good impression during his visit to the U.S. Army School of the Americas in the Panama Canal Zone: “Pinochet was in Panama before coming to Mexico to negotiate purchase of tanks from U.S. Govt. He felt he was very well treated came away believing U.S. will supply tanks after all. (While in Panama, talked with more junior U.S. Army officers he knew from days at School of Americas and was told U.S. will support coup against Allende ‘with whatever means necessary’ when time comes.”<sup>81</sup>

It appears that U.S. intelligence had to prod Pinochet and the other officers to act, even as planning on their part grew more active. During the Independence holidays, which lasted from September 16th to the 20th, the CIA seemed more eager for a coup than the Chilean military. The Santiago station was disappointed, as it reported to Washington: “It is station’s opinion that possible coup attempt over the Chilean Independence holidays is now less likely than it appeared to be 48 hours ago. We will remain alert to developments and continue to keep HQs advise [sic].”<sup>82</sup>

In the midst of all this intrigue, the president of Chile decided to bring his case before the world. Addressing the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 4, 1972, Allende indicated that the Nixon administration had not fooled him. “We are having to face forces that operate in the half-light, that fight with powerful weapons, but that fly no identifying flags and are entrenched in the most varied centers of influence,” he said.<sup>83</sup>

Allende regarded the economic conflict between his country and the U.S.-based multinational corporations as a struggle for sovereignty. Should power rest with the people or with the capitalist elite? The Chilean president then made a statement that still has relevance in this age of globalization: “Merchants have no country of their own. Wherever they may be they have

no ties with the soil. All they are interested in is the source of their profits. Those are not my own words; they were spoken by Jefferson.”<sup>84</sup>

The people exercised their power through their participation in democratic government. For U.S. corporations in possession of Chilean assets, however, the priority was the bottom line, and the empowerment of the Chilean people threatened profits. Certainly, Kennecott displayed little regard for the Chilean people when it flouted Chilean constitutional procedures. Allende pointed out that the corporation had appealed to a special Chilean tribunal after the expropriation. The tribunal decided in favor of Chile. Rather than accepting that decision, Kennecott pressured European countries not to purchase Chilean copper. “Such a pretension runs counter to fundamental principles of international law, according to which a country’s natural resources—particularly when they are its lifeblood—belong to it and are freely utilized by it,” Allende said.<sup>85</sup>

In an impressive use of statistics, the Chilean president made it obvious that the profits of Kennecott and Anaconda were indeed excessive. Kennecott had generated an average profit rate of 52.8 percent in Chile each year, but it accrued a profit rate of less than 10 percent abroad. Anaconda, for its part, collected a 21.5 percent profit annually in Chile from 1955 to 1970, compared to 3.6 percent elsewhere. Allende was angry: “Those same enterprises exploited Chile’s copper for many years, in the last 42 years alone taking out more than \$4,000 million in profits although their initial investment was no more than \$30 million. In striking contrast, let me give one simple and painful example of what this means to Chile. In my country there are 600,000 children who will never be able to enjoy life in a normal human way because during their first eight months of life they did not receive the minimum amount of protein. Four thousand million dollars would completely transform Chile. A small part of that some would ensure proteins for all time for all children of my country”<sup>86</sup>

Allende saw his country’s struggle as a symbol of the Latin American struggle, a struggle against economic imperialism. “This is something that is embodied in the conscience and determination of more than 220 million human beings who demand that they be listened to and respected,” Allende said.<sup>87</sup>

Interestingly, the Chilean president did not once mention the names of Richard Nixon or Henry Kissinger. This was a delicate time in U.S.–Chilean relations, so it would have been impolitic for Allende to attack them directly. Even at this strained point, the Chilean government had not completely lost hope of reaching a *modus vivendi* with Washington. In anticipation of Allende’s visit to the United States, Ambassador Letelier had written a cable exclusively for Foreign Minister Almeyda: “I believe we

should not discard totally the possibility that President Nixon, in a surprise move that is characteristic of his personality, may form in a determined moment an invitation to President Allende. This invitation could have the purpose of sustaining an ample conversation on the relations between both countries or have a merely ceremonial character. It is most probable that this will not occur. In spite of that, I consider it prudent to be prepared for an alternative of this type. I believe if the invitation comes, it would be difficult to turn down.”<sup>88</sup>

The invitation never arrived. Washington had corporate interests to serve. As Allende was appealing to the soul of the United Nations, Kissinger’s staff not only planned for an eventual coup, but for its aftermath. The minutes of a meeting that Charles Meyer chaired on October 17, 1972, are heavily censored. Fortunately, a CIA report of an unidentified meeting, dated two days later, had similar wording: “In order to establish precisely what technical difficulties would be involved, working level members of the ad hoc committee on Chile are being asked to examine all possibilities for assisting any post-Allende Chilean government.”<sup>89</sup>

The ad hoc committee did not debate whether the United States should sponsor a coup, only how it could help: “[censored, but probably U.S. intelligence] role will probably continue to be limited to strengthening the opposition and monitoring developments, if, however, contingency circumstances should lead to a military coup [censored] felt that military would then want: first, military hardware to maintain law and order; secondly financial assistance to achieve a level of liquidity which would permit the new government to function effectively; and thirdly the more traditional forms of aid in terms of food, loans, etc. on an accelerated basis.”<sup>90</sup>

The legitimate government of Chile could never dream of such generosity. Even as the Nixon administration refused to reschedule Chile’s general foreign debt, it extended almost endless forgiveness to Chile’s military. The State Department noted, “With respect to Chilean delinquencies on its debt to the U.S., we have reached agreement in principle with the GOC on the terms of the rescheduling of the amounts due on the military credits, and have offered to sign the agreement immediately.”<sup>91</sup>

After rescheduling the Chilean military’s own debt, Washington offered credits for foreign military sales. The Chilean armed forces received \$10 million in FMS credits for Fiscal Year 1972, and \$12.4 million for Fiscal Year 1973. The State Department believed it was imperative that the U.S. government meet the needs of the Chilean military for FY 1973. “It would be harmful to U.S. interests if the Chilean military were to become committed to the UP revolution, which ARA [a policy-planning committee] believes

could well be a consequence of our reduction at this time of FMS credit below \$12.4 million," the State Department warned.<sup>92</sup>

Collaboration between Washington and the mutinous officers became even more urgent when the anti-UP coalition failed to win a two-thirds majority of the Chilean Congress on March 4, 1973. Having won 54.7 percent of the vote, the opposition now controlled thirty of forty Senate seats, and sixty-three out of 150 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Despite pockets of lower-class opposition, the UP's electoral share of 44 percent does not seem impressive, but when one remembers the 36.4 percent share won by the UP in 1970, this was a remarkable gain. Allende was more popular than ever. The UP enjoyed even greater approval from the proletariat, both urban and rural.<sup>93</sup> Criticism from the ultra-radical MIR had not weakened Allende from the leftward side at all. Furthermore, the enormous bourgeois opposition turned out to be not quite so enormous, winning only 56 percent of the vote instead of the expected 67 percent.<sup>94</sup> "It was said to be the largest increase an incumbent party had ever received in Chile after being in power more than two years," wrote William Blum, a former State Department employee.<sup>95</sup> Essentially, Allende had the popular mandate to remain in control of Chile until 1976.

As in the plotting before Allende's accession in 1970, Washington's policy had two tracks: political and military. A few in the CIA opposed the implementation of the two tracks. Subsidizing Chile's armed forces and Chile's political opposition simultaneously would ultimately work against each other: "It is our understanding that a policy designed to provoke a military coup in the next six months to a year must seek to increase political tensions and to intensify economic suffering, particularly among the lower classes so that a feeling of national desperation will impel the military to move. Financial assistance to opposition political parties, and particularly to the proposed mass activities of the PDC, will tend to dispel this feeling of desperation and to contribute to helping the economy."<sup>96</sup>

The author of this memorandum did not want to wait for the 1976 presidential campaign to unseat the UP. A coup would be the only alternative favorable to the Nixon administration: "It is true that the UP may well win legally in 1976, and that even the prospect of a PDC victory in the 1976 elections leaves much to be desired. The Chilean situation may thus be considered desperate, and the U.S. Government must decide whether the risks involved in desperate remedies are justified."<sup>97</sup>

Even though the 40 Committee continued the two-track policy by authorizing \$1 million in August for the political opposition as well as the private sector, Nixon and Kissinger wanted Allende out in 1973, not 1976.<sup>98</sup>

Therefore, U.S. military and intelligence officers closely monitored the power struggle between the constitutionalists and the conspirators in the Chilean military. They were particularly concerned about stubborn loyalty of General Prats to the Allende government. Allende had appointed Prats defense minister instead of a civilian as a defensive measure. "He [Prats] charged his commanders, down to the company level, 'with their lives' to keep the troops out of political problems," the U.S. Defense Department noted.<sup>99</sup> By May, Prats felt enough pressure "and agreed to inform President Salvador Allende personally of the rising discontent of [censored] over government policies and actions."<sup>100</sup> At that point, the CIA found that most of the Chilean Army generals supported a coup.<sup>101</sup>

A failed mutiny, the so-called *Tancazo*, as opposed to General Roberto Viaux's *Tacnazo* of 1969, on June 29 did not discourage U.S. intelligence. "Flag rank officers of all three services are meeting regularly for this purpose," the CIA reported with likely satisfaction of this probable dry run by lower-ranking officers.<sup>102</sup> Since Prats stood in the way, the generals and their right-wing allies disposed of him in a petty manner.

The pretext was the most peculiar incident. Prats would recall that on July 25, 1973, he "was driving in military uniform in a military car . . . when people traveling in four or five cars repeatedly made disgusting gestures at me and yelled obscene epithets at me."<sup>103</sup> Well-aware of plotting within his own military, Prats was extremely tense.<sup>104</sup> He feared the people were all targeting him for a Schneider-style killing.<sup>105</sup> Suddenly, a mannish-looking woman, Alejandrina Cox, looked at him and put her tongue out. Assuming that the tongue-sticking stranger was a male member of a group of conspirators, Prats took out his pistol and shot at her car. Chile is a country with a grand tradition of chivalry, and the unfortunate general was mortified when he learned his mistake.<sup>106</sup> Although Cox was unhurt, Prats felt obligated to resign, but Allende would not hear of it.<sup>107</sup> "I would not have shot if I had known she was a woman," Prats said in a public statement. "I publicly repeat my apologies to Señora Cox, in her condition as a woman."<sup>108</sup> Interestingly, Cox, an aristocratic opponent of the UP government, would express remorse about her own behavior, but much too late for Prats to know.<sup>109</sup>

The generals would exploit Prats's shame to their own advantage. On August 21, their wives stood in protest outside the house of the commander-in-chief, a true humiliation in patriarchal Chile. They compounded the humiliation by persuading Señora Prats to accept a letter that urged the general to resign. Realizing that he had no support, he did just that on August 24, explaining that the generals "have not acted as they should. I could not divide the army."<sup>110</sup> He also left the civilian Ministry of Defense. Probably, Prats

lacked the late General Schneider's fortitude and strength of character. One newspaper headline read: "Women Throw Out Prats."<sup>111</sup>

The women's husbands wanted to replace him with General Manuel Torres, who was third in command, when the coup began. The future despot of Chile still had not earned the total respect of his brother officers: "The plotters do not regard General Augusto Pinochet, who is the second most senior officer in the Army, as a suitable replacement for Prats under such conditions."<sup>112</sup>

When Prats resigned, Allende immediately appointed Pinochet commander-in-chief of the Chilean Army.<sup>113</sup> It has been suggested that Allende made a calamitous error by cultivating the armed forces instead of preparing the working classes for armed struggle, as MIR would have preferred.<sup>114</sup> One may never know for sure. Jorge Arrate, the chief executive officer of Chile's public copper company, CODELCO, wondered later if Allende should have fired the highest ranking military men, for the Chilean president knew about the close ties between the Washington and his own country's armed forces. He definitely had the constitutional right to do so: "If he would have done this, and used his faculties, his legal faculties, the question is: Would this have anticipated the military coup? It's something that you cannot answer. You can build a hypothesis, but I have no answer to that."<sup>115</sup>

Either way, Allende could sense the restiveness of his armed forces. After appointing his intimate associate, Ambassador Letelier, as minister of defense, Allende tried to establish a rapprochement with the military. In spite of the tension he felt, the Chilean president still believed that the stability of his government depended on the military. Again dangerously crossing the civilian line, Allende also gave the ministries of mines and finance to military officers.<sup>116</sup>

Those within the military's lower ranks perhaps suffered the tension even more than Allende did. One member of the Chilean Air Force tried to alert the UP activists among his friends of the impending coup. Disregarding what the airman had to say, few of those friends escaped later imprisonment or death.<sup>117</sup>

Unquestionably, the Air Force member took great risk himself in trying to help his friends, as did any member of the Chilean military who tried to prevent the coup. In August of 1973, the navy arrested more than hundred men, including civilian shipyard employees as well as sailors, with the charge of "insubordination." These unfortunate men were tortured for information on their alleged ties to the UP, but the Navy simply did not have a real case against them. Actually, it turns out that the naval authorities themselves were guilty of insubordination. They had targeted their victims for their opposition to the coup. When the naval prisoners were finally permitted to

speak with a lawyer a week later, they wrote to Allende: “Is defending the government, the constitution, legality, and the people crime? Is overthrowing the government, violating the law, and ending the lives of thousands of human beings legal?” Unfathomably, Allende failed to repond.<sup>118</sup> Perhaps he simply felt trapped by circumstances. Whatever the reason, he now had few progressive friends left in the Chilean armed forces, whose reactionary commanders were now at the beck and call of Washington.

As beleaguered as his government was by the forces of reaction, Allende still must have drawn psychological sustenance from his supporters until the very end. Exactly a week before the coup, approximately one million Chileans marched past *La Moneda*, the presidential palace, and chanted: “*Allende! Allende! El pueblo te defiende!*—Allende! Allende! The people will defend you!” Chile had never seen a more heavily attended demonstration.<sup>119</sup>

Sadly, Allende’s earnest working-class allies were no match for the military. The Chilean president’s efforts to conciliate the generals were also futile. The planned coup faced no impediment, and Washington knew that the Chilean military would violently repress the left. “During a meeting [censored portion] General Pinochet included in his remarks the fact that he intended to take a very hard line in dealing with the MIR [group to the left of Allende],” the CIA reported less than a month before the coup. “He stated that the Army would in fact wipe out the MIR.”<sup>120</sup> The Nixon administration was prepared to help Pinochet in this campaign of terror: “It is likely that any form of military intervention would result in a request to the U.S. for bilateral military assistance, particularly for riot control equipment, tear gas supplies and possible medical support and Mobile Training Teams. In fact, an interest in purchasing riot control equipment under FMS credits already has been communicated to us on an official basis. It might be useful to process this request before any change in government occurs, if the Chileans are willing to utilize unused past FMS credits or pay cash.”<sup>121</sup>

Of course, Pinochet’s forces could use this equipment not just against violent revolutionaries but also against law-abiding defenders of the Chilean constitution, but the Nixon administration did not see distinctions among the political left. All that mattered was that the Chilean military would reverse the Allende experiment. “After some, perhaps considerable bloodletting, Chile could eventually achieve a greater measure of political and social stability than had been the case under Allende,” the CIA concluded about the possibility of a coup.<sup>122</sup> CIA agent Donald Winters recalled that “the understanding was they [the Chilean military] would do it when they were ready and at the final moment tell us it was going to happen.” In any case, the CIA knew at least one day in advance “that a coup attempt will be initiated on

11 September. All three branches of the armed forces and the *carabineros* are involved in this action."<sup>123</sup>

Two days before the coup, Admiral José Toribio Merino, the commander of the Chilean Navy, wrote to General Pinochet and General Gustavo Leigh Guzman, the commander of the Chilean Air Force: "You have my word of honor that D-Day will be the 11 at 06:00 hours. If you cannot accomplish this phase with the total of the forces at your command in Santiago. . . ." <sup>124</sup>

Pinochet and Guzman had no objections. Interestingly, on September 9, Allende had informed Pinochet of his plan to hold a referendum on his own government; in effect, a national vote of confidence.<sup>125</sup> If Pinochet had truly believed that support for the UP government was weak, he could easily have cancelled the coup so he could gleefully witness the political undoing of Allende. Despite the anti-Allende sentiment among the socioeconomic elite and a segment of the middle class, however, the coup was an act of force rather than an expression of popular will.

Allende realized what was happening as the militarists conspired behind his back, and so did Castro. The Cuban leader informed Allende that the Cuban embassy had stored a number of "automatic weapons, antitank weapons" that would be adequate to sustain a battalion. Allende never took advantage of this offer. In those last chaotic days, Allende permitted the Chilean Communists to accept additional Cuban arms. When it came to his own Socialist party, however, Allende was less receptive to Havana's generosity because "he was afraid that they would one day take to the street with machine guns." Sadly, Castro recalled that the Socialists "took a few weapons, but far fewer than we wanted to give them."<sup>126</sup> Still, as disappointed as Castro was by Allende's reaction, he must have realized that the Chilean government had no chance against the upcoming coup. The force of the Chilean military, backed with U.S. support, would simply be too great. After the coup took place, the CIA determined that "Havana [saw] external military intervention—a war between Peru and Chile for example—as the only possible, though somewhat unrealistic way of unseating Chile's military government."<sup>127</sup> In reality, the Chilean government was entirely on its own.

On the morning of September 11, 1973, Allende learned by telephone of a naval uprising in the port town of Valparaiso. Rushing from his private residence to *La Moneda*, Allende then found that all the armed forces had risen.<sup>128</sup> The besieged president shortly afterward received a message from Pinochet, Admiral Merino, General Gustavo Guzman, and General Cesar Mendoza Duran, commander of the police: "The President of the Republic must resign from his high post immediately, in favor of the armed forces and

the police; the armed forces and the police are united in their determination to assume their historic role of fighting to free their country from the Marxist yoke and to re-establish order and the rule of law.”<sup>129</sup>

Another admiral, Gustavo Carvajal, followed this message with a telephone call, urging Allende to leave Chile. The president angrily refused: “Allende is not going to surrender, you military shit [*milicos de mierde*]!” Making a final radio address at 9:30a.m., Allende said:

This is the last time I shall speak to you. The air force has bombed all our radio stations. My words flow more from disappointment than from bitterness—let them serve as a moral condemnation of those who betrayed their oath. . . . Faced with all these events, there is only one thing I can say to the workers: I shall not surrender. Radio Magallanes [pro-UP station] will be silenced very soon too, and my words will no longer reach you. Yet you will continue to hear them; I shall always be with you. At the very least I shall leave behind the memory of an honorable man, who kept faith with the working class. Long live Chile! Long live the people! Long live the workers!<sup>130</sup>

In response to these moving words, Pinochet issued the following instruction to Admiral Carvajal: “Now, attack the Moneda! Give it to them!”<sup>131</sup> The Chilean Air Force complied with two Hawker Hunter jets. Amidst this aerial devastation, Allende commanded his loyal followers to leave the palace, including his personal physician. The doctor obeyed, but then returned to retrieve his gas mask to encounter a gruesome sight: “He saw the president sprawled in an armchair, the right of his skull smashed, the brain spilling out, his helmet on the floor, a machine gun still resting precariously on his knees.”<sup>132</sup>

Allende's death has been a point of controversy ever since. Was he murdered or did he commit suicide? After the coup, future French President Francois Mitterrand recalled his 1971 visit to *La Moneda*. Mitterrand remembered that Allende had expressed his admiration for his predecessor, President Jose Manuel Balmaceda, who had killed himself in 1891. “If I am overthrown one day,” Allende told the Frenchman, “I will do the same thing.”<sup>133</sup>

The surviving members of the UP had a hard time accepting the idea that their leader had committed suicide. Arrate certainly found it difficult, but he said in the end it did not matter if Allende died either by his own hand or that of someone else: “He defended a building that was impossible to defend against Air Force and tanks, with a machine gun. So, he was in the position to give his life, and those who threw rockets against the building obviously were trying to kill the people who was inside. So, if he [committed] suicide or was murdered, it's the same. Those who threw the rockets wanted to murder him, and they were murderers.”<sup>134</sup>

Allende probably never really had the option of escape. Had the Chilean president taken the plotters' offer of a flight out of the country, he would not have survived. When the offer had been made, Pinochet laughingly said "that plane will never land. Kill the bitch and you eliminate the litter."<sup>135</sup>

Thirty-two years later at the National Historical Museum in Santiago, I came across a poignant symbol of Allende's destruction: a fragment of his horn-rimmed glasses. Allende met a sad end, but the Chilean people have more than his broken eyewear for a memento. His statue now rests in an honored place outside the very palace where he took his own life. Salvador Allende is now a figure of respect as well as tragedy.

Back in the fall of 1973, however, Kissinger was not thinking of Allende's place in history. When hearing of the Chilean president's death, Kissinger was blasé. Conversing with Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Rush two days after the coup, the national security advisor only expressed mild annoyance: "Well, now at the briefing today I think we can express regret at the personal fate of Allende. Of course, it's an absurd situation where we have to apologize for the overthrow of a hostile government—of a government hostile to us."<sup>136</sup>

Kissinger was still untroubled when he chatted with the president on September 16. "Nothing new of any importance or is there?" Nixon inquired of his conduit to international affairs. "Nothing of very great consequence," Kissinger answered.<sup>137</sup> The destruction of democracy in a Latin American country did not matter. Only four civilian democracies remained in South America: Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana.<sup>138</sup> As much as Kissinger would have liked to see them fall, the collapse of Allende still pleased him immensely. "The Chilean thing is getting consolidated and of course the newspapers are bleeding because a pro-Communist has been overthrown," Kissinger said, puzzled by all the fuss.<sup>139</sup> In fact, the national security advisor was thinking about attending a football game that day. "I mean instead of celebrating—in the Eisenhower period we would be heroes," Kissinger complained. "We didn't—as you know—our hand doesn't show on this one though," Nixon replied, perhaps remembering that their conversation would be recorded. "We didn't do it," Kissinger agreed, also maintaining some level of plausible deniability. "I mean we helped them."<sup>140</sup>

Pinochet, who dominated the military junta by this point, understood this strategy of denial. Ambassador Davis reported to Washington about the Chilean dictator: "He showed understanding and was relaxed about matter of recognition and volunteered that obviously we should not be first to recognize. He showed some recognition of advisability of not too much public identification with us at moment."<sup>141</sup>

While Kissinger would only admit privately to assisting those who had betrayed Allende, it is inconceivable that they would have acted without his guarantees. If Washington had threatened the Chilean military with financial sanctions when it learned of their definite plan, Allende would have remained in power past September 11. Arrate argued that even though the Chilean political scene was sharply divided, with great support for both ideological extremes, policymakers in Washington decided Chile's fate. Arrate observed: "It's true that the country was polarized, but when countries are polarized the outcome can depend on a very decisive extent on influence. And I think that's what the U.S. did. The Chilean Right is very powerful. It's very powerful even today. It has always been powerful . . . but not the Chilean Right nor the militaries would have behaved as they did if they had not had the American support."<sup>142</sup>

Judge Juan Guzman, who later served as Pinochet's prosecutor, had collected enough information during his investigation to form a considered opinion. "I think, and many people here in Chile think, that the support given from the United States was fundamental," Guzman said.<sup>143</sup>

Profoundly culpable, Nixon and Kissinger rejoiced in Allende's fall, and regarded the bloodshed as a fair price to pay. For both psychological and economic reasons, the imperium in Latin America had to be maintained.

Pinochet, who ruthlessly and quickly seized unilateral control of the Chilean state, waged an effective war against his own country. Destroying a democracy that was a century and a half old, the new dictator dissolved the Chilean Congress. He outlawed political parties and the CUT labor organization. Martial law effectively brought an end to the true rule of law in Chile. The junta quickly dispatched its political opponents to detention centers such as the National Stadium, the Chile Stadium, the Air Force Military Academy, the Naval War Academy, and the infamous Villa Grimaldi complex.<sup>144</sup> These locations became factories of death.

The majority of the immediate victims were former government officials, political activists, and labor leaders. The very most prominent detainees were usually held at the Ministry of Defense before relocation elsewhere. Less prominent targets on the political left soon followed.<sup>145</sup> The agencies that directed this persecution were the intelligence services of the Chilean armed forces: the Navy, the Air Force, and the Army. The Army's *Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional*, better known as DINA, was the most notorious.<sup>146</sup> First established in 1973, DINA became an independent agency the following year.

These intelligence services either shot their victims or knifed them to death. Whatever method chosen, the victims endured torture before their execution. One such victim was Eugenio Ruiz-Tagle, who met his doom on

October 19, 1973. When his mother beheld his body, she knew he had not died a merciful death: "An eye was missing, the nose had been ripped off, the one ear visible was pulled away at the bottom, there were very deep burn marks as though done by a soldering iron on his neck and face, his mouth was all swollen up, there were cigarette burns, and judging from the angle of the head, his neck was broken; there were lots of cuts and bleeding."<sup>147</sup>

The beautiful folksinger Victor Jara was another victim. After his execution at the Chile Stadium, his wife found him with his hands broken, his face mutilated, and his body bearing forty-four gunshot wounds.<sup>148</sup>

By the end of 1973, 1,500 Chileans had perished. Thousands more had no choice but to seek refuge abroad. Favoring the affluent at the expense of the less fortunate, the military regime made Santiago's working-class neighborhoods a special target. "No one likes to have his house raided," one General Alejandro Medina said. "But if there are rats inside, you accept that someone comes in to get them out."<sup>149</sup>

Judge Guzman estimated that 3,500 Chileans were either killed or "disappeared" during the seventeen years of military rule, but the prosecutor hesitated to settle on a number as he discovered more and more remains from the period. Indeed, the death toll could have been as high as 4,000.<sup>150</sup>

Chilean bodies and souls were no longer sacred. Those lucky enough to escape death were not lucky enough to escape torture. According to the report by Chile's National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture, at least 28,000 people survived physical and psychological agony. Most of these victims of torture were young men between the ages of twenty and thirty. They were members of the Socialist and Communist parties, trade unions, organizations that were now all banned.<sup>151</sup>

All the standard techniques, too numerous and varied to fully list, were employed to inflict pain. Military authorities beat their victims with their fists, and kicked them for good measure. The captors took care to aim repeated blows at the eyes, nose, mouth, neck, knees, and sensitive private parts.<sup>152</sup> In addition, prisoners were forced to assume excruciatingly uncomfortable positions. The Chilean military also favored the application of electric shocks, and the all the main detention sites had equipment for this specific purpose. In September of 1973, one unfortunate man detained at the Air Force Academy had reason to regret the development of electric power: "With my eyes covered I was seated in a chair, simulating an electric chair because the hands and feet were tied to the chair, the torso was also tied down, then the eyes and mouth were also tied. The electric wires were put on my head; at the beginning of the sessions of torture my head and mouth lost control . . . I bit both sides of my tongue and the interior of my cheek."<sup>153</sup>

Afterward, water was sometimes applied to intensify the shock.<sup>154</sup> Prisoners were denied food, drink, and access to toilets. For example, a prisoner in the city of Chol Chol was crammed into a tiny cell: “The room was about two by two meters; we were one top of the other. I also remember they didn’t allow us to go to the bathroom and we had to defecate right there. Many of us were throwing up because of the pain and because of the terrible smell that was in the place.”<sup>155</sup> Asphyxiation was not unknown, nor was exposure to extremes in temperature.<sup>156</sup>

Torment of the mind can be more devastating than that of the body. Psychotherapist Otto Doerr-Zegers described psychological torture as an assault on “all the victim’s possible existential platforms.”<sup>157</sup> Political prisoners were subjected to extreme mental suffering: threats against themselves or their loved ones, simulated executions, and deprivation of sleep.<sup>158</sup> The captors made their captives kiss their boots, crawl on the floor, and even ingest bodily wastes. When one prisoner in the city of Contulmo did not answer a question to a lieutenant’s satisfaction, he “ordered that excrement be brought from the stable and water in a bottle. Then he asks me the same and because I gave him the same answer they . . . hit me in the stomach and put the excrement in my mouth. Then they used the water to make me eat everything.”<sup>159</sup> By humiliating their captives in unspeakable ways, the military authorities completely deprived them of any sense of themselves.

Not all the victims of torture were male. Women endured a special kind of degradation that had both psychological and physical consequences. Many years later, more than 3,000 testified about their rapes. Given the shame that surrounded sexual violence in a patriarchal culture, it is likely that even more women remained silent.<sup>160</sup>

In Santiago, a sergeant repeatedly attacked Luz Arce, a former member of Allende’s *Grupo de Amigos Personales*, or personal bodyguard. During one sexual assault “he pushed my head underwater. . . . More water entered my mouth and nostrils as I fought him. I felt nauseous . . . and I ended up vomiting. I remember the sergeant’s disfigured face through the water, and feeling of suffocation.”<sup>161</sup>

During this time of mass slaughter and torment in Chile, the Nixon administration offered generous assistance from Washington: “On 17 September the Chilean Air Attache in Washington requested immediate delivery from the Canal Zone of the following items: 1 million rounds—7.62mm ammunition; 2,000 flares; 1 parachute; 1,000 steel helmets; 1,000 liners; 1,000 parkas. All of the above are available in the Canal Zone. Transportation to Chile will be via Chilean Air Force planes. Approval of sale of these items is recommended.”<sup>162</sup>

Pinochet's actions gave many of his initial supporters pause. Surprisingly, even Judge Guzman had been a conservative in favor of the coup. "We thought that simply that Allende was not able to govern this country," Guzman explained, "and I believed that this was going to be a short, a very short period of . . . putting things in order to have the democratical system work again here."<sup>163</sup> Slowly, Guzman realized the true nature of the new regime. At first, he had thought that the military were merely fighting rebels "when I started realizing as a judge that most of the people that had been killed were paupers, very poor people, old women, old men, lots of outlaws also, some kids, then I realized that this was really a slaughter."<sup>164</sup>

Guzman also upgraded his opinion of Allende. "Well, I think he would have been a better president if he would have had the Congress on his side," Guzman said.<sup>165</sup>

Unfortunately, Allende was gone now, and as the atrocities in Chile continued to shock and disgust the entire world, Kissinger, who was now secretary of state, remained complacent. The new president, Gerald R. Ford, carried on the Chilean policy of his predecessor, who had resigned in disgrace during the Watergate scandal. Still, political pressure in his own country compelled Kissinger to speak about the issue before the Organization of American States in 1976. Meeting with Pinochet before his speech, Kissinger assured his client that he was only going through the motions: "I will say that the human rights issue has impaired relations between the U.S. and Chile. This is partly the result of Congressional actions. I will add that I hope you will shortly remove these obstacles . . . I can do no less, without producing a reaction in the U.S. which would lead to legislative restrictions. My speech is not aimed at Chile. . . . We welcomed the overthrow of the Communist-inclined government here. We are not out to weaken your position."<sup>166</sup>

For effectively reversing the progressive agenda of the Allende government, Pinochet had Washington's wholehearted support. Socialism in Chile was dead. Kissinger and his two presidential patrons thought they had won. Indeed, in the short-term, they certainly did. Yet, in the long-term, the United States lost. By maintaining U.S. hegemony over Latin America, they only made the entire Western Hemisphere less secure. Governments that deal aggressively with their people do not restrain their aggression in their dealings with other countries. As a result, even the capital of the United States felt the effects of the Chilean terror. Orlando Letelier, the former ambassador and Cabinet minister who had served under Allende, was living in exile in Washington, where he was a leading critic of the Chilean junta. He now worked at the Institute for Policy Studies, a progressive think tank. In September of 1976, a car bomb took his life. Ronnie Moffit, an IPS

fundraiser who was in his car, died, while her husband, Michael, who was also Letelier's assistant, was injured in the blast. DINA had planted the bomb to eliminate Letelier.<sup>167</sup> In order to silence Letelier's effective lobbying against his dictatorship, Pinochet was willing to violate the territorial integrity of the United States. Kissinger and Ford may have believed that it was in the interests of the United States to support the Chilean dictatorship, but that dictatorship proved more harmful to our national security than the Allende government could ever have been. Perhaps Kissinger should have paid closer attention to an NSC memorandum produced months before the coup: "If we confine ourselves to reacting when a U.S. interest is in jeopardy, if we respond to each challenge to our interests with sharpness and force, political alienation will grow and conflicts and disputes will spread. A decade from now we will indeed have a new relationship, but it will be a generally hostile one."<sup>168</sup>

Chilean opponents of Pinochet never committed violent acts against the United States, but repressed people in other countries have. It is a truism that U.S. policies abroad have repercussions at home. On the twenty-eighth anniversary of the Chilean coup, Saudi and Egyptian terrorists crashed passenger jets into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, two symbols of North American might and power. Numerology has no place in serious historical analysis, but the coincidence should make thoughtful Americans ponder to some extent. Like the murderous Pinochet in the 1970s and 1980s, the authoritarian rulers of Saudi Arabia and Egypt enjoy Washington's beneficence. One must remember that victims of tyrannies do not cower forever; eventually they fight back. The American people, or at least its more privileged sectors, cannot flourish at the expense of others and expect to live in a stable world.

In the case of Chile, our support for the junta had repercussions even greater than the horrifying murders of Letelier and Moffitt, when American citizens became the direct targets.

## Notes

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