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Greg Garcia, Jr.

Western Oregon University, ggarcia10@wou.edu

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WESTERN OREGON UNIEVRSITY

9/11/73: The “Chilean Way” to Socialism hits a Dead End.

An analysis of the death of Salvador Allende in the context of Chilean political history.

Greg Garcia Jr.

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HST 600 Brazil and Chile
Professor John L. Rector

On September 11, 1973, the Chilean military waged a siege against the Presidential Palace of La Moneda in the nation's capital at Santiago. Their target was Salvador Allende, President of Chile and leader of the Unidad Popular, a leftist political coalition. At the end of this military standoff, Allende was dead, several of his cabinet members were taken hostage, and the military was inserting itself into the political vacuum to rule the Chilean people in an ultra-right wing dictatorship. This act of insurrection by the Chilean military against its government was the result of a sequence of failed policies created from a political experiment hailed by Allende as the "Chilean way to socialism." The novelty of the "Chilean way" experiment is that maintained the Marxist principle of redistribution of wealth but varied from Marxist methodology by arguing that it could be achieved without a violent revolution of the proletariat. The implications of this theory threatened the Cold War balance of power in the western hemisphere and prompted the both the United States and the Chilean political right to take action against its possible success.

Ever since the beginning of Allende's political career, in 1933, these organizations have both covertly and conspicuously tried to impede Allende's ascension to power in Chile. While political candidates such as Jorge Alessandri and Eduardo Frei ran against Allende and succeeded in winning the presidency in the elections of 1958 and 1964, respectively; in both elections the United States government covertly undermined the Allende's attempts. It was only in 1970, during Allende's fourth run for president, did he finally succeed in winning by plurality, not a majority,¹ and was inaugurated as President of Chile.

As part of Allende's "Chilean way," he attempted to make Chile self-sufficient and a developed nation by expropriating industries from foreign capitalists, raising wages, bettering the healthcare

¹ Joseph L. Noguee, John W. Sloan, "Allende's Chile and the Soviet Union: A Policy Lesson for Latin American Nations Seeking Autonomy" *Journal for Inter-American Studies and World Affairs*, 21 (Aug. 1979), 341

system for his citizens, and implementing cutting edge technological apparatuses for his country. The ultimate tragedy for Allende was after obtaining the position necessary for him to implement his theory; he died in a coup that broke out in opposition to his theory. The death of Allende marked the bloody end of this leftist experiment and the beginning of an era of repression and terror. While the United States can be held responsible for some of these elements, credit cannot be solely attributed to the Nixon administration for the failure of the “Chilean way.” The dead end of the Chilean way can be attributed to several individuals, foreign and domestic, military and civilian, and rich and poor. In this paper, I will examine Allende’s attempts to bring socialism to Chile starting with his first candidacy for president in 1952 in order to demonstrate that Allende’s peaceful road to socialism was doomed to fail due to an overwhelming amount of opposition from both the United States and members of Chilean society.

In order to examine Allende’s political aspirations, it is first necessary to examine the life of Allende himself. Salvador Allende Gossens was born June 28, 1906 to a wealthy family in Valparaiso, Chile.² The financial status of his family and its lavish lifestyle later posed a contradiction to Allende’s leftist views toward capitalism. This sentiment is buttressed by an experience U.S. defense attaché to Santiago, Col. Paul Wimert, had with Allende in which he recalls the following:

This beautiful yacht...came gliding across the water to hook up to the wharf, and there was this gentleman un a white hat and a white cravat with a blue admiral’s coat...He looked [like] one of those old wealthy people--- the Vanderbilts of America—I couldn’t believe he was Allende...He was beautifully groomed, and of course his sailing ship was one of the nicest ones there. It didn’t sit right that he was supposed to be a communist or a socialist.³

This image of a politician from Chile’s bourgeoisie earned Allende the reputation of being a

² Kristian Gustafson, *Hostile Intent: U.S. Covert Operations in Chile, 1964-1974* (Washington D.C., Potomac Books, Inc, 2007), 25

³ Gustafson, 28

“champagne socialist”⁴ following the European tradition and championing the ideas of change through democratic reform. He starkly contradicted with the “barbudo” communist like Fidel Castro or Che Guevara who, like Allende, hailed from the upper classes of their societies, but believed that guerilla warfare was the best way facilitate social change. In 1933, while still in medical school, Allende founded the Chilean Socialist Party, which countered the already existing Chilean Communist Party.⁵ In an interview with Regis Debray, Allende explains he formed the Socialist Party as an alternative to the Communist Party due to the fact that he believed the Communist Party was “a closed inward looking party.” He, along with the other founders of the Socialist Party, “analyzed the situation in Chile and ...believed that there was a place for a Party which while holding similar views in terms of philosophy and doctrine ---a Marxist approach to the interpretation of history---would be a Party free of ties of an international nature.”⁶ Allende did maintain however that although the Chilean Socialist Party was separated from the Chilean Communist Party, it still championed the Marxist ideal of the international plight of the proletariat.

Four years after forming the Socialist Party, Allende was elected as a Federal Deputy in the non-Marxist Popular Front government and later served briefly as Minister of Health.⁷ In 1952, Allende proposed legislation that provided public healthcare for low income people. This legislation led to the creation of the National Health Service, or *Servicio Nacional de Salud* or SNS.⁸ In the same year he made his first attempt to run for President of Chile as a Socialist and would receive 5.5 percent of the vote.⁹ In 1958, shortly before his second run for president, Allende was approached by a KGB agent codenamed

⁴ Gustafson, 26

⁵ Regis Debray, *The Chilean Revolution: Conversations with Allende* (New York, Pantheon Books/Random House, 1971), 61

⁶ Debray, 62

⁷ Lajpat Rai, “Peaceful Transition to Socialism: The Prospect in Chile” *Economic and Political Weekly* 46 (Nov. 18, 1972), 2299

⁸ Howard Waitzkin, “Health Policy and Social Change: A Comparative History of Chile and Cuba” *Social Problems* 31 (December 1983), 237

⁹ Gustafson, 23

LEADER. Whose appraisal of Allende was that “his willingness to co-operate on a confidential basis and provide any necessary assistance” meant he considered himself “a friend of the Soviet Union” and “willingly shared political information.”¹⁰

While Allende’s connection with the KGB have attracted him some attention as a Soviet sympathizer, his campaign platform in the 1958 Presidential election made him the biggest communist threat to the western hemisphere. For the next three campaigns, Allende would run under the principles of “redistribut[ing] income and reshap[ing] the Chilean economy, beginning with the nationalization of major industries, especially the copper companies; greatly expand[ing] agrarian reform” and concluding with “expanding relations with socialist and communist communities.”¹¹

The gravity of Allende’s threat to U.S. Cold War strategy can best be described by Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Inner-American Affairs, Roy Rubottom, who pointed out during the 1958 Presidential Election, “If Allende were to win we could be faced with a pro-Soviet, anti-U.S. administration in one of the most important countries in the hemisphere.”¹² As a result of this looming threat of Chile being the first Marxist state in the West,¹³ the U.S. government authorized the CIA to take action against Allende in order to prevent him from being elected to the office of president. Later a congressional investigation would reveal that the CIA spent \$8 million dollars in affecting the outcomes of the 1958, 1964, and 1970 elections.¹⁴ The CIA, ordinarily conducts several types of operations in foreign countries which fit under the categories of clandestine collection of positive foreign intelligence: counterintelligence (or liaison with local services); and covert action.

¹⁰ Gustafson, 31

¹¹ The Church Committee, *The Church Report*, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1975, 15

¹² Gustafson, 20

¹³ Please note: in 1958, Fidel Castro was still fighting Batista in Cuba and still considered himself to be a “humanist” instead of a Marxist.

¹⁴ The Church Committee, 20

Under the category of “covert action,” the CIA would construct its strategy against Allende as a candidate and later as a president. The primary operation that the CIA conducted against Allende was the creation and dissemination of propaganda. This proved to be a cost effective strategy for the CIA because it was relatively cheap to produce, could be disseminated through media outlets, and could be produced faster in times with a little rise in cost if it was needed in an extreme situation.¹⁵ The CIA also employed a style of propaganda known as “black” propaganda, which served the purpose of “falsely purporting the product of a particular individual or group.”¹⁶ The dissemination and exchange of blatantly false information has the purpose of misleading the targeted group. The efficacy of “black” propaganda can be problematic as evidenced by the fact that it was employed in the 1970 presidential election to sow discord between the Communist and Socialist Parties.¹⁷ This tactic would create new problems for governing when in this election Allende finally achieved the presidency.

The second element of the CIA’s covert campaign against Allende’s political aspirations was the subsidizing of Chilean media organizations that were friendly to those of the United States. An example of this was the CIA bankrolling the Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio* in 1970 to oppose Allende whose right leaning politics served as a weapon by which the CIA could covertly combat Allende.¹⁸ To achieve this, \$4.3 million would be used in this process over the years to combat him.¹⁹ This money proved to be even more powerful than the initial figure implies due to the strength of the American dollar in the Chilean economy. This is evidenced by a statement made by an anonymous CIA operative in Chile who said, “Money went a long way there. A couple of copy machines, etc. and a few thousand dollars did things.”²⁰

¹⁵ The Church Committee, 18

¹⁶ The Church Committee, 19

¹⁷ The Church Committee, 19

¹⁸ Gustafson, 24

¹⁹ The Church Committee, 20

²⁰ Gustafson, 167

A third element that the CIA used involved the infiltration of various organizations in Chile such as the Chilean military and its political parties. From 1964-1968, the CIA successfully recruited collaborators both Frei's administrative cabinet and the Socialist Party.²¹ This phenomenon only intensified as time progressed. A critic of this process, Kyle Steenland, points out in his article entitled "The Coup in Chile" that by the time of the 1973 coup, the CIA had infiltrated all political parties in Chile.²² Steenland also points out that the CIA as well as the U.S. military took a leadership role in training Chile's Black Berets, the equivalent of the United States Special Forces.²³ This fact suggests that the CIA and the U.S. military had some involvement in the coup attempt that led to the death of Allende in 1973.

Finally, the last covert action the CIA took against Allende in his elections of 1958, 1964, and 1970 was the funding of opposing parties such as the Christian Democratic Party and the National Party. This is documented by the fact that \$4 million dollars by the CIA was funded to these parties during the time of Allende's presidency.²⁴ More would come to these parties, especially the Christian Democratic Party, during the time of Allende's campaigns.

With all of these covert elements in place, the U.S. government sought out to prevent the election of Allende starting for the first time in 1958. While the CIA succeeded in their efforts in preventing Allende from winning the election, the margin by which he lost was incredibly narrow. Allende finished second in the 1958 Presidential election losing to Alessandri who could not gain a majority in the election and was voted in by the Chilean Congress. According to the Church Report the few thousand votes which went to a leftist priest, had instead gone to Allende he would have achieved a

²¹ The Church Committee, 21

²² Kyle Steenland, "The Coup in Chile" *Latin American Perspectives* 1 (Summer 1974), 22

²³ Steenland, 20

²⁴ The Church Committee, 23

majority and would have won the election.²⁵ This fact placed fears on the potential outcome of the 1964 presidential election as U.S. Ambassador to Chile Walter Howe stated after the election, “we must recognize that the political pendulum has swung as far to the right in Chile as it is likely to go, and that the return swing is likely to be evidenced in the presidential election of 1964.”²⁶ This fear would resonate in every presidential election in which Allende ran because of the implication that a Marxist candidate could rise to power via the democratic process.

In 1959, however, Allende’s threat to the Cold War status quo was dramatically eclipsed by the rise of Fidel Castro and his Cuban Revolution. This dramatic event in modern Latin American history had a profound impact on Allende’s political career. Allende was one of the first politicians to visit Havana, Cuba after the successful march of the Castro brothers into the city. In a later 1973 interview with Régis Debray, Allende indicated that he was initially not impressed with the outcome of the Revolution:

I was at my hotel and that afternoon there was a parade, which for me, was not merely surprising, but quite simply incredible. This parade was headed by 200 Miami policemen, and in an open car there was the Mayor of Miami and I think the Mayor of Havana. Next day, intending to take a plane to Chile, I met Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, whom I had known in Chile. He asked me what I was doing there, and I replied, ‘I came to see the Revolution, but since there is no such Revolution, I’m going. What kind of Revolution is this going to be, with the Miami police in attendance?’²⁷

Rodríguez was able to introduce Allende to the leaders of the Cuban Revolution: Fidel Castro and Ernesto “Che” Guevara. When introducing himself, Guevara was interrupted telling him, “Look, Allende, I know perfectly well who you are. I heard two of your speeches during the ’52 presidential campaign; one was very good, the other very bad. So we can talk in complete confidence, because I have a very clear opinion of who you are.”²⁸ Allende’s friendship with Guevara would mature over the years. In the same interview with Debray, Allende mentions having a signed copy of Guevara’s book *The*

²⁵ The Church Committee, 16

²⁶ Gustafson, 23

²⁷ Debray, 72

²⁸ Debray, 73

Guerrilla War which reads, “To Salvador Allende, who is trying to obtain the same result by other means. Affectionately, Che.”²⁹ Allende’s relationship with Guevara continued during the time of his Bolivian campaign. In addition to being the founder of the Chilean Socialist Party, Allende also helped found the Latin American Solidarity Organization which played an integral part in getting Cuban guerrillas out of Bolivia after Guevara’s death.³⁰

Allende met Fidel Castro on the same day he met Guevara and was instantly impressed by his “immense intelligence” but he also had “fundamental and violent” differences of opinion with him.³¹ Castro criticized Allende’s Chilean Way to Socialism which was announced after he was elected president. In a speech which Castro gave to the Latin American Solidarity Organization, he stated that “Those who believe that they are going to win against the imperialists in elections are just naive, and those who believe that the day will come when they will take over through elections are even more naive ... That socialism can come to power without a struggle, that it can come to power peacefully through elections is a lie.”³²

However, Castro decided to assist Allende in his endeavors by helping him construct a security agency consisting of his own Cuban intelligence officers who worked “both under diplomatic cover, and as ‘illegals.’³³” Castro also provided Allende with assistance in reforming the healthcare system by sending advisors from his Ministry of Health to Chile during the time of Allende’s Presidency.³⁴ While Allende considered Castro to be a good friend and was in his debt considerably, from his acts of aid, the Church committee documents that Allende “refrained from excessive overtures” to him.³⁵ As a gift to his “comrade in arms” Castro gave Allende an AK-47 assault rifle with the message “To Salvador, from your

²⁹ Debray, 74

³⁰ Gustafson, 27

³¹ Devray, 73-74

³² Rai, 2294

³³ Gustafson, 172

³⁴ Waitzkin, 236

³⁵ The Church Committee, 75

comrade in arms, Fidel (*A Salvador de su compañero de armas, Fidel*)”³⁶ inscribed on it. Ironically, this is the same rifle by which Allende allegedly took his own life three years later.

When the United States perceived the Cuban Revolution to be Marxist in nature, it began to combat its influence in Latin America. The United States started its new anti-communist campaign in the western hemisphere by attempting to isolate Cuba economically and diplomatically, encouraging other western countries to follow suit. As a result of this pressuring by the United States after the Cuban Revolution, Jorge Alessandri broke all diplomatic and economic ties between Cuba and Chile during his administration.³⁷ This was a decision that Allende would reverse as one of his first acts as president. The United States also provided an economic incentive for countries to isolate Cuba with its Alliance for Progress campaign. The purpose of this campaign was, as Kennedy explained to,

...offer a special pledge --- to concert our good words into good deeds--- in a new alliance for progress--- to assist free men and free governments in casting off the chains of poverty. But this peaceful revolution of hope cannot become prey to hostile powers. Let all our neighbors know that we shall join with them to oppose aggression or subversion anywhere in the Americas.³⁸

In accordance with this plan, the United States sent \$17 billion in foreign aid to Latin American countries.³⁹ The purpose of this plan, much like its predecessor, the Marshal Plan, which rebuilt Europe after World War II was to build the modern infrastructures of developing countries with the ulterior motive of making capitalism appealing to its citizens. This sentiment is well articulated by Washington lawyer and Assistant Secretary of State under the Nixon administration, William D. Rogers, who stated that the Alliance for Progress plan was “admittedly (designed) to counter the lure coming out of

³⁶ Oscar Soto, *El Ultimo Dia de Salvador Allende* (Santiago, Chile, Aguilar Chilena de Ediciones, Ltd. 1998), 66

³⁷ Soto, 43

³⁸ Gustafson, 24-25

³⁹ Gustafson, 26

Havana.”⁴⁰ Another way the United States “countered the lure” was influencing the outcome of elections in Latin America, especially of candidates that had Marxist sympathies, such as Allende.

With Allende deciding to run for president again in 1964, the United States was particularly invested in the outcome of the Chilean election, both politically and economically. In October 1963, the first National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) of Chile brought up the possibility that “the 1964 presidential election might bring to power a government under strong Communist influence, if not control.”⁴¹ This statement has credence for two reasons. The first reason is 1964 was the year Chile and the Soviet Union re-established diplomatic relations.⁴² The second reason is the fact that Allende was running this time under a political coalition known as the Popular Action Front (FRAP), which consisted widely of leftist politicians. This would serve as the predecessor for the Popular Unity coalition under which Allende would run in the 1970 election. In this election, Allende fully came into the scope of the U.S. government as evidenced in a profile on Allende written in the same NIE which reads that Allende was:

a chameleonic person.. Is vain, quick tempered, easily offended, socially as well as politically ambitious... Sensitive to charges (that) he would be dominated by Communists or that he would institute anti-democratic measures. Nevertheless were he to achieve power we think he could be led by events into being harsh and ruthless with his opponents but more likely use exile than prison or pardon. It is probably that he thinks in terms of a Marxist regime similar to Castro's Cuba in its free-wheeling, relatively independent, but bit more sophisticated, cultured, without the notional excesses of a "tropical" country such as Cuba.⁴³

Such a notion was unacceptable to the Kennedy administration and the Johnson administration after Kennedy's assassination had specifically ordered that a right wing candidate win the election.

Therefore, the CIA began to covertly support the Christian Democratic candidate Eduardo Frei.⁴⁴ The CIA's choice of the Christian Democratic Party was designed to attract the “soft-socialist/pro-clerical”

⁴⁰ Gustafson, 27

⁴¹ Gustafson, 26

⁴² Roger P. Hamburg, “Soviet Policy and the Church, the Christian Democrats, and Chile” *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, 11, (Oct 1969) 605

⁴³ Gustafson, 29

⁴⁴ The Church Committee, 30

vote away from Allende's FRAP, thereby sabotaging his potential to win the election.⁴⁵ This decision by the CIA was very prudent due to the fact that the Soviet Union, taking advantage of its new relations with Chile, sought to create Catholic trade unions in order to "strengthen the clerical position in the worker movement."⁴⁶ Therefore, strengthening Frei's campaign had the potential to pull Chileans out of the Soviet orbit and back into proper alignment with the United States.

In addition to giving Frei the some necessary money and logistical support to win the election, the CIA also covertly built up the appeal of the Christian Democratic Party to members of Chile's peasant and slum dwelling class. The purpose of this was to "train and organize 'anti-communists' in these sectors"⁴⁷ which typically tend to embrace Marxist doctrine. The CIA continued to do this until it was exposed in a congressional probe on the CIA's use of funds and was cut off in 1967. However, it should be noted that the CIA maintained its infiltrated status in Frei's cabinet.

The CIA appropriated \$2 million to the Frei presidential campaign. This amount of money served to be a considerable amount of money, even by American campaign standards. An additional \$500,000 was earmarked for the Frei campaign because "Frei had miscalculated his finances." The CIA simply attributed this misuse of funds to his party's "inexperience in organizing a campaign of this magnitude."⁴⁸ As debates ensued as to whether the addition \$500,000 should be sent to the Frei campaign, NSC staffer Peter Jessup made the case that the United States "can't afford to lose this one, so I don't think there should be any economic shaving in this instance. We assume the Commies are pouring in dough; we have no proofs. They assume we are pouring in dough; they have no proofs. Let's pour it on and in."⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Gustafson, 35

⁴⁶ Hamburg, 608

⁴⁷ The Church Committee, 35

⁴⁸ Gustafson, 45

⁴⁹ Gustafson, 46

In addition to funding the Frei election campaign, the CIA also began disseminating propaganda for the purposes of frightening the Chilean people of a communist dictatorship that could potentially rise in their country. These propaganda campaigns included the funding of media organizations against the leftist policies of Allende and the FRAP as well as posters “depicting Soviet tanks and Cuban firing squads” attacking Chilean civilians.⁵⁰ During this election, a firm opposition organization was built that would later be used when Allende finally won the election in 1970. This opposition consisted of the military as well as other right wing organizations. On June 2, 1964, an anti-leftist organization known as the “Legion of Liberty” took form consisting of a “Radical Party candidate for election, several other Chileans and an ex-politician from another Latin American country.” Less than two months later on July 20, a Chilean Air Force general threatened the Chilean people with the possibility of a coup if Allende won the election.⁵¹

The policies of the Legion of Liberty and the Chilean military were not only restricted to attacking leftist politicians. Moderate and conservative politicians were targeted as well. The Legion of Liberty also threatened an armed rebellion against the government if Frei ever pursued a coalition with the Communist Party. This is most likely in retaliation to a statement made by Allende during the campaign that his FRAP would be willing to form a coalition with Frei’s Christian Democratic Party in order to implement reform.⁵² The formation of this anti-communist group demonstrates an opposition to leftist ideas which stems from a Latin America itself and not the United States. This is an important precedent to notice because in the 1970 election and during the Allende administration, more anti-leftist groups formed independently demonstrating that there was also an anti-Marxist sentiment native to Chile.

⁵⁰ The Church Committee, 31

⁵¹ The Church Committee, 33

⁵² Hamburg, 611

Frei would win the 1964 presidential election with 57 percent of the vote and began his “Revolution in Liberty” campaign.⁵³ As part of this campaign, Frei sought to expand the economy by “Chileanizing” the copper mines, 80 percent of which were owned by the American companies Anaconda and Kennecott.⁵⁴ The purpose of “Chileanization” was to have the Chilean government and the two aforementioned American companies work together to increase production and the quantity of local refining. In his article entitled “Chile: From Christian Democracy to Marxism?” Alan Angell outlines the failure of this plan by stating that “the high price paid by Chile for the major mine involved, the El Teniente mine of the Kennecott company, meant high returns for the Americans and low returns for Chile.”⁵⁵

Another act of reform that the Frei administration attempted was to raise the wages of people living in rural areas. Peter A. Goldberg in his article entitled “The Politics of the Allende Overthrow in Chile” outlines the logic Frei might have followed by which an act of reform like this had the potential to work. Goldberg states that government and white collar employees received a cost for living raise in 1940 and blue-collar workers in 1956 and the economy flourished. However, when Frei attempted to use this for the rural working class, the economy suffered 30 percent inflation due to the fact that the Chilean economy did not have the supply to meet the demand of such a raise in wages.⁵⁶

Some successes of the Frei administration, however, include raising Chile’s exports from \$676 million to \$1.139 billion and turning a Chile’s budget from a \$4 million dollar deficit in 1964 to a \$183 million dollar surplus.⁵⁷ It should be noted, however, that the rise in exports was mostly attributable to the copper industry as demonstrated by the fact that non-copper exports only rose from \$193 million to

⁵³ The Church Committee, 17

⁵⁴ Noguee and Sloan, 346

⁵⁵ Alan Angell, “Chile: From Christian Democracy to Marxism?” *The World Today* 26 (Nov. 1970), 490

⁵⁶ Peter A. Goldberg, “The Politics of the Allende Overthrow” *Political Science Quarterly* 90 (Spring, 1975), 100

⁵⁷ Angell, 489

\$231 million during his presidency.⁵⁸ This is an indicator that Chile, may have had what Castro referred to as, a “one dimensional economy.” Frei also expanded the electoral base of the Chilean populous to include youth voters, recognized trade unions in the economic process, and called for the organization of “Neighborhood Committees” which may coincide with the CIA’s attempts to attract the lower class to the Christian Democratic Party and away from the leftist Popular Action Front coalition.⁵⁹ This is evidenced by Oscar Soto’s account of the Frei administration as being a “Revolution in liberty, against the left.” (*Revolucion de Libertad, contra la izquierda*).⁶⁰

Due to Chile’s constitution that says a president may serve two terms but not consecutively, Frei could not seek re-election in the 1970 election cycle. Therefore Radmiro Tomic was chosen as the presidential candidate of the Christian Democratic Party, Alessandri, now eligible for a second term, sought election under the National Party, and Allende pursued the presidency for a fourth time with his coalition of leftists, the Popular Unity, and ran under the slogan, “the objective is total, scientific, Marxist socialism.”⁶¹

The Popular Unity consisted primarily of a union between the Socialist Party, Radical Party and the Communist Party but also consisted of various extremist left wing organizations such as the *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionario* or Revolutionary Leftist Movement, or MIR, and the *Vanguardia Organizada del Pueblo* or the Organized Vanguard of the People, or VOP. It is very important to point out that this coalition represented views from all corners of the left wing from moderate to extreme. This ideological diversity caused major issues for Allende once he achieved power.

⁵⁸ Angell, 490

⁵⁹ Henry A. Landsberger, Tim McDaniel, “Hypermobilization in Chile 1970-1973” *World Politics* 28 (Jul. 1976), 505

⁶⁰ Soto, 44

⁶¹ Gustafson, 29

This was the fourth time Allende tried to obtain the presidency and the third time the United States government covertly attempted to sabotage his election by employing covert strategies. The 1970 election also showed the potential for violence of the right and military against Allende. This is evidenced by a statement made by Ambassador James Gardner who said that “if an Allende victory appears certain, Frei should act on his own to have the armed forces intervene.”⁶²

The United States was desperate to have Allende lose the 1970 election and was confident that such an event would happen based on the 1969 NIE which stated that even though a Marxist coalition would have won the election, the Chilean people would be resistant to “dependence on Moscow or Havana”⁶³ for material and political sustenance. While it was possible that Chile might cut off its ties with the United States, it would be equally opposed to the Soviet Union. The same NIE questions the efficacy of a Marxist coalition in power due to the fact that it must “appeal to at least partially to the opposing spectrum of the electorate in order to pass certain reforms.”⁶⁴ This point would be demonstrated much to the frustration of Allende during his tenure as president.

The NIE also states that an accelerated political movement “toward ‘a full embrace of communism’ would engender a counter-reaction by Argentina, Peru, and/or the United States in support of the Chilean military, if not a direct invasion.”⁶⁵ This point is well taken considering the local and international opposition of communism in the western hemisphere. However, this did not “exactly” happen, for reasons which will be discussed later. The NIE also prophetically states that if such momentum to communism was “try[ing] to move too far and too fast, the Chilean security forces would unseat it.”⁶⁶

⁶² Gustafson, 95

⁶³ The Church Committee, 75

⁶⁴ Gustafson, 83

⁶⁵ Gustafson, 84

⁶⁶ Gustafson, 86

Therefore, using all of the strategies it had already employed in previous elections, the CIA under the instruction of President Nixon for the third time tried to prevent Allende from obtaining the office of president. This time, the United States failed. Allende succeeded in obtaining a plurality in the election, receiving 36.3 percent of the vote to Jorge Alessandri's 34.9 percent of the National Party and Radmiro Tomic's 27.8 percent for the Christian Democratic Party.⁶⁷ Angell attributes Alessandri's loss to his failure to use television as a medium for a political agenda. While Allende and Tomic had each made twenty-four appearances on television, Alessandri only appeared three times, and in each, he was perceived to be "looking old, ill at ease, and nervous."⁶⁸

With Allende winning the popular vote but lacking a majority, the Nixon administration developed two innovative strategies to prevent Allende from being inaugurated. The first strategy, known as "Track I" involved negotiating with conservative and Christian Democratic members of Chilean Congress a piece of political maneuvering known as "the Frei gambit." Under this strategy, those congress representatives opposed to Allende, would vote for Alessandri instead of Allende for the office of president. Upon being inaugurated, Alessandri would immediately resign, and prompting a special election by which Frei could legally be a candidate due to the fact that technically a president had served after his administration.⁶⁹

The attempt prevent Allende from being inaugurated failed when the Christian Democrats rejected the maneuver. Then the Nixon administration authorized "Track II," a covert military action whereby Allende would be prevented from being inaugurated by a military coup. In implementing this plan, Nixon arranged a private meeting between himself, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, Attorney General John Mitchell, and CIA Director Richard Helms. The U.S. Ambassador to Chile was

⁶⁷ Angell, 492-493

⁶⁸ Angell, 492

⁶⁹ The Church Committee, 42

intentionally not at this meeting in order to uphold the illusion that the U.S. had no involvement or prior knowledge to the coup.⁷⁰ This is a tactic the U.S. government would use again in 1973. Under “Track II,” Nixon authorized the CIA to send “three submachine-guns...to three military officers who planned to use them in instigating an uprising in the Armed Forces.”⁷¹ This uprising would then capture General Rene Schneider, Commander in Chief of the Chilean Army, and a prime obstacle for instigating a coup. The military would then remove the existing government and seize control of the country. This was the theory. The actual practice of this plan is another topic entirely.

Colonel Paul Wimert was the American officer chosen to coordinate the coup and described the evolution as “a Christmas party--- throwing [money] here, some there and some to some place else. There was no real... leadership in the Washington area.”⁷²As a result, contact broke down with the Chilean military officers and the weapons were returned to the U.S. government. But the kidnapping attempt by the officers continued, even though the U.S. government was not supporting them. On October 22, 1970, the officers attempted to kidnap Schneider, who resisted, was shot, and shortly thereafter, died.⁷³ General Carlos Prats, a firm supporter of the Chilean constitution, quickly took power and blocked the coup by remaining loyal to the government and its constitution. This armed attempt to block Allende’s inauguration had failed.

Two days after the failed attempt of Track II, Allende was elected president of Chile receiving 153 votes in his favor to 42 either against or abstaining.⁷⁴ Finally, after four elections, three of which were influenced by the CIA, Allende became president of Chile. The failure of “Track II” forced the Nixon administration to re-evaluate its stance against Allende and it decided to take a “cool and correct”

⁷⁰ The Church Committee, 24

⁷¹ Gustafson, 132

⁷² Gustafson, 133

⁷³ The Church Committee, 25

⁷⁴ Gustafson, 130

stance to his administration.⁷⁵ Instead of assisting in armed military conflict, Nixon decided, as articulated in National Security Decision memorandum 93, to attack the Allende administration economically by “cutting off all new bilateral and multilateral aid.”⁷⁶ This decision would prove to inflict far more damage on Chile than the previous coup attempts.

Upon getting elected president, Allende declared that in his victory address that “I won't be just another President: I will be the first President of the first really democratic, popular, national, and revolutionary government in the history of Chile”⁷⁷ and that “along with me, the people are entering La Moneda.”⁷⁸ From the office of the president, Allende could finally execute his peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism. In implementing his “Chilean way,” Allende sought to advance Chile from a developing nation to a developed nation employing all sorts of innovation and reform.

In keeping with the precedent set by his predecessor, Frei, Allende sought to increase the rate at which land was expropriated from the *latifundia* and distributed to land less peasants. He also raised the wages of the Chilean worker.⁷⁹ In addition, Allende attempted to build on his SNS healthcare system in order to make healthcare available for all Chilean citizens regardless of their social class. This was accomplished by a “health train” which traveled across the nation and succeeded in providing healthcare for 30,000 Chileans.⁸⁰ In keeping with this innovation, Allende sought to make a half-liter of milk daily available to children under 16 through the school system. As a result 48 million liters of milk were distributed to children in 1970.⁸¹

⁷⁵ Gustafson, 142

⁷⁶ Noguee and Sloan, 346

⁷⁷ Angell, 494

⁷⁸ *The Other 9/11: Chile--Coup d'état* Directed by: Nicholas White, 2011. British Broadcasting Company. London, UK. Documentary.

⁷⁹ Noguee and Sloan, 342

⁸⁰ Waitzkin, 240

⁸¹ Noguee and Sloan, 343

Continuing to provide for the destitute, Allende sponsored a home construction program whereby 80,000 homes were constructed for needy families.⁸² Allende sought to align the aspirations of the government with those of the working class by signing an agreement with the Centralized Union of Workers, or the *Central Unica de Trabajadores* or the CUT on December 17, 1970.⁸³ This allowed the workers to have an active role with the government in the nationalization process. This agreement sparked many controversies which will be discussed later. Allende also acquired many of the banks in Chile by purchasing massive amounts of bank bonds on the market.⁸⁴

In addition to providing services to the youth and underprivileged classes in Chile, Allende also aspired to improve Chile's computer science prowess by raising the Chilean people to the same level as the United States and England. Early in Allende's presidency, he ordered the construction of a cybernetic infrastructure known in English as "Cybersyn" and in Spanish as "Synco" which enabled the government "to grasp the status of production quickly and respond to economic crises in real time."⁸⁵

This project would be executed in three phases: the first phase entitled "Cybernet" would expand the existing telex network whereby all nationalized companies along Chile's three thousand mile long territory would be connected to the a central government computer in Santiago.⁸⁶ The second phase entitled "Cyberstride" would involve the implementation of processors capable of processing and monitoring the information, and the third phase entitled Chilean Economy or "CHECO" involved the creation of software that could actually simulate economic trends in order to predict future trends in the Chilean market.⁸⁷ As daunting as this appears, the first two phases of this project were accomplished

⁸² Noguee and Sloan, 345

⁸³ Landsberger and McDaniel, 527

⁸⁴ Gil Morem, "Democracy, Dependency, and Destabilization: The Shaking of Allende's Regime" 105 (Spring, 1990), 81

⁸⁵ Eden Medina, "Designing Freedom, Regulating a Nation: Socialist Cybernetics in Allende's Chile" *Journal of Latin American Studies* 38 (Aug. 2006), 571-572

⁸⁶ Medina, 587

⁸⁷ Medina, 587-589

by 1973. This prompted, Stafford Beer, a British cybernetician and head of the project to declare, “[The] Cyberstride suite really works ... The whole thing was impossible and we did it.”⁸⁸

The ambition of this plan can only truly be appreciated after seeing the context of Chile in computer science before the Allende administration. In 1968 *Datamation*, a computer science journal, noted in an issue that Chile possessed only 50 computers in its territory thereby being dwarfed by the number of computers in Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, and Venezuela.⁸⁹ After being elected president, Allende sought to place his country on the cutting edge of technological innovation by creating a sophisticated computer network whereby the output of all companies could be monitored by the government. There would be public backlash for this; however this will be discussed later.

The first year of Allende’s administration saw significant improvement over the Chilean economy and the advancement of the Chilean people. For example, national salary rose from 51 percent to 59 percent in 1970, industrial production was up by 12 percent and unemployment went down from 12 percent to an all-time low of 3.8 percent.⁹⁰ Overall production in Chile also rose by 11.6 percent and the real wage earnings of Chilean factory workers went up by 30 percent.⁹¹

In keeping his Chilean Way to Socialism, Allende sought to make Chile independent from foreign economic interests. In doing this, Allende sought to nationalize the copper mines in Chile from the American Anaconda and Kennecott Companies⁹² and declare a moratorium on the majority of Chilean debts to foreign powers.⁹³ Whether Allende was conscious of this or not, this action gave the United States and the Nixon administration the ability to manipulate his country in numerous ways. Shortly after this declaration, the Nixon administration, in concert with the CIA, declared an economic blockade

⁸⁸ Medina, 592

⁸⁹ Medina, 586

⁹⁰ Noguee and Sloan, 342

⁹¹ Medina, 579

⁹² Noguee and Sloan, 343

⁹³ Paul E. Sigmund, “The ‘Invisible Blockade’ and the Overthrow of Allende” *Foreign Affairs* 52 (Jan 1974), 325

on Chile which had repercussions leading directly to the successful coup against Allende in 1973.⁹⁴ It should be noted that that other countries were able to compensate Chile for the reduction in U.S. loans.

The expropriation of American interests in Chile, which prompted the blockade, was an economic error for the Allende administration. This is due to the fact that the ordinary 40 percent of Chile's imports which come from the United States was now reduced to 20 percent due to the blockade.⁹⁵ The Chilean people were also technologically dependent on the United States due to the fact that as Goldberg explains "the Chilean transportation sector [a] large percentage of all buses and trucks are General Motors or Ford models."⁹⁶ The expropriation of American interests resulted in Allende alienating the nation responsible for its development which caused a blockade that brought Chilean development to a halt.

There was one exception to the blockade United States' credit and that pertained to the Chilean military. The total blockade of Chile might force the military to turn to other markets such as the Soviet Union, for funds and hardware, which could be potentially hostile to the United States. This U.S. fear was justified by the fact that General Carlos Prats did in fact travel to Moscow in May 1973 to negotiate military sales.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, the Chilean military continued to receive funds, arms, and services from the U.S. government.

Allende attempted to rectify this situation by turning to the Soviet Union for economic and industrial aid. Allende believed that the Soviet Union would help due to the fact that it widely advocated that Latin American nations reduce their ties to the United States.⁹⁸ Allende also noticed the \$4.14

⁹⁴ Steenland, 21

⁹⁵ Goldberg, 109

⁹⁶ Goldber, 110

⁹⁷ Gustafson, 155

⁹⁸ Noguee and Sloan, 340

billion in assistance that the Soviet Union gave to Castro's Cuba from 1967-1972.⁹⁹ However, when he approached the USSR was to give qualified assistance to Chile, at best.

Part of the problem was that the Soviet Union was technologically incompatible with Chile to provide the proper funds and materials. Economists Noguee and Sloan emphasize this in their article entitled "Allende's Chile and the Soviet Union: A Policy Lesson for Latin American Nations Seeking Autonomy." They pointing out that the Chilean government paid \$5.5 million in cash for a singular Boeing 727 aircraft instead of using Soviet credits for the purchase of Soviet manufactured *Ilyushins* due to the fact that Chilean pilots and mechanics would have to be retrained to operate them.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, industrial equipment for Chile must be done with American-made hardware, which the Soviet Union did not have.

In addition to being technologically unable to assist Chile, the Soviet Union was also economically incapable of assisting Chile. While it is true that the Soviet Union had funded billions of dollars to assist Cuba, Chile was not Cuba. Allende was not Castro. Moscow's assistance to Havana was grandfathered into the Soviet economy from a commitment between Khrushchev in Castro in the name of "proletariat internationalism."¹⁰¹ To reverse that position as Noguee and Sloan point out, "might undermine one of the most sacrosanct of communist principles, the irreversibility of socialist construction."¹⁰² In other words, the obligation the Soviet Union had with Cuba was a carry-over from an older era in Soviet policy which they could not reverse. Whereas, with Chile the USSR had the opportunity to regulate the amount of they could give. It should be noted that while Noguee and Sloan do not indicate this, it could be possible that the Soviet Union was reluctant to give money to Allende on the ground that his Popular Unity may lose power in the Chilean government. This would heighten the

⁹⁹ Noguee and Sloan, 350

¹⁰⁰ Noguee and Sloan, 349

¹⁰¹ Noguee and Sloan, 350

¹⁰² Noguee and Sloan, 351

risk of the Soviet Union not seeing a return on their loan due to the fact that a party with an anti-Soviet policy might fill the vacuum and the loans would not be paid.

It is also necessary to note that the Soviet Union could not afford “another Cuba,” let alone a “Chile;” especially taking into account the three thousand miles in Chile’s landscape and millions of citizens. The Soviet Union was already too economically committed in maintaining the status quo. This is not to say, however, that the Soviet Union did not assist Allende economically. The Soviet Union granted \$183 million directly, with an additional \$115 million from the Eastern bloc countries, and \$65 million from China.¹⁰³

The Soviet Union punctuated this assistance by articulating several times that Chile was not ready for a transition into a Marxist state. As Viktor Volsky indicated in an edition of *Latinskia Amerika* “the road to socialism on the continent of [Latin America] lies basically through a people’s democratic revolution, those who have claimed that Latin America is now ready for a full transition to socialism are condemned as radicals, guilty of what Lenin called ‘left-wing infantilism.’”¹⁰⁴ *Pravda* also stated that the Soviet Union endorsed the Popular Unity to maintain a mixed economic structure of both private and public property “for a long time to come.”¹⁰⁵ Allende, due to his differences in Marxist-Leninist theory, coupled with an overestimation of possible Soviet aid, was frustrated in his attempts for larger Soviet aid.

While Allende was frustrated in not getting larger financial support from the Soviet Union, he was able to successfully barter however \$800 million at the Paris Club which would be used to pay off foreign debts to other countries.¹⁰⁶ Allende’s loan from the Paris Club to pay another set of loans is

¹⁰³ Noguee and Sloan, 350

¹⁰⁴ Noguee and Sloan, 351

¹⁰⁵ Noguee and Sloan, 355

¹⁰⁶ The Church Committee, 56

analogous to using a credit card to paying off another credit card. This demonstrates a critical point in the economics of Allende's government; that he accumulated more debt to pay off earlier debts.

While Allende's attempts for international aid were being frustrated, issues continued to plague him domestically. Mass assemblies were staged against the Chilean government such as the "walkouts" whereby truck owners and taxi drivers took to the streets in order to protest their inability to maintain their vehicles, namely the scarcity of tires.¹⁰⁷ Eventually, the Confederation of Truck Owner-Operators waged a strike in October 1972 that was aided by the CIA.¹⁰⁸ Again the truckers would strike again in July 1973.¹⁰⁹ One of the famous acts of protest against the Allende administration was the March of Empty Pots which occurred in December 1971 whereby middle and upper class women marched through Santiago chanting slogans such as "Listen to us Allende," "Chilean Women ---- Save Chile from Socialism," and "There is no meat; there is nothing."¹¹⁰ This was caused by the fact that Chile's agricultural system went from exporting agricultural goods in 1969 to having to import \$280 million in foodstuffs in the early 1970s.¹¹¹

One success, however, was the "Cybersyn" project which Allende created to technologically advance the Chilean computer network. The press and the Chilean people lambasted it, however, as being an element of totalitarian control. A Chilean centrist publication *Ercilla* denounced the project as being "*El hermano mayor*" or "Big Brother" referencing the George Orwell book *1984* and the right wing magazine *Que Pasa* denounced the project under the slogan "*Nos controlan por computacion*" or "They control us through computer science."¹¹² In response to his healthcare innovation, many doctors

¹⁰⁷ Goldberg, 109

¹⁰⁸ Goldberg, 110-111

¹⁰⁹ Francisco Zapata, "The Chilean Labor Movement Under Salvador Allende: 1970-1973" *Latin American Perspectives*, 3 (Winter 1976), 94

¹¹⁰ Gustafson, 163

¹¹¹ Gustafson, 206

¹¹² Medina, 600-601

boycotted the SNS system choosing to remain in private practice in order to tend to wealthier patients.¹¹³

Almost immediately after Allende's election, the copper miners at Chuquicamata went on strike and petitioned Allende for a wage increase of 70 percent, the president berated them however for being a "labor aristocracy."¹¹⁴ The strike cost Chile \$36 million in 1970 and \$12 million in 1971.¹¹⁵ Many of these strikes were considered to be illegal by Chilean law. For a strike to be considered legal in Chile, it must be due to the failure of collective bargaining. By this reckoning, striking for any other reason such as protesting the government for violation of civil rights, protesting factory owners for arbitrary use of power, or protesting for political issues, was deemed illegal.¹¹⁶

Allende attempted to rectify this by bringing the military into the negotiations. To end the 1972 trucker's strike Allende called General Prats to join the cabinet. Allende's decision was in error, according to historian Paul Sigmund, who said that, "accelerated the politicization of the military and undermined the position of those like Prats who favored the maintenance and constitutionalism of civilian rule."¹¹⁷ Sigmund's argument is well taken because not only did Allende's action bring the military into a civilian affairs, it also was a largely right wing entity, supporting a radical left wing cause. This had the potential to cause massive conflict within the ranks of the Chilean military.

One political issue that clearly points out the flaw in Allende's "Chilean Way to Socialism" was the issue of the democratic process. In being elected president of Chile, Allende took control of the executive branch of the Chilean government. However, the judicial and the legislative branches remained in control of the opposition parties. For example, of the justices of the Supreme Court in Chile,

¹¹³ Waitzkin, 237

¹¹⁴ Landsberger and McDaniel, 523

¹¹⁵ Landsberger and McDaniel, 524

¹¹⁶ Zapata, 86

¹¹⁷ Gustafson, 205

only one was loyal to Allende, and he was scheduled to retire.¹¹⁸ The legislative branch in Chile was openly hostile to Allende's agenda and tried to counter him at every possible chance, resulting in mutual antagonism. A prime example of this was in July 1971 the Christian Democratic majority in Congress accused the Allende administration of using loopholes in the Constitution to expropriate Chilean industries and proposed an amendment to the constitution whereby Congress would have to ratify all further expropriations.¹¹⁹ Allende rejected this amendment on the basis that it limited his power as chief executive.

Another example that further demonstrates the clash of political ideologies was the fact that both the Christian Democratic Party and the National Party formed a political alliance with various trade unions including truck drivers, pharmacists, and general shop owners. Together they staged a massive strike against the Allende administration and the Popular Union which occurred in October 1972 and again in September 1973.¹²⁰ This strike called for Allende to be removed from office. As chaos threatened on the national political scale, schisms began to form within Allende's own Popular Unity such as between the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the CUT, and the MIR, and the VOP, and the MAPU.¹²¹

These schisms were based on both political strategy and Marxist theory. For the VOP and the MIR, the peaceful Chilean way could not possibly work. Their interpretation of Marxism was that only through a violent uprising of the working class can a bourgeois society be transformed. This is evidenced by the fact that the MIR began to seize land illegally and even without the permission of the Popular Unity. Even worse the VOP managed to assassinate President Frei's former interior minister Edmundo Perez Zujovic in June 1971.¹²² These schisms impeded Allende from fully executing his duties and powers

¹¹⁸ T.V. Sathyamurthy, "Chile: Parliamentary Socialism and Class Struggle" *Economic and Political Weekly* 10 (April 5, 1975) 586

¹¹⁹ Medina, 579

¹²⁰ Zapata, 94

¹²¹ Sathyamurthy, 585

¹²² Gustafson, 147

as president and instead reduced him to what could be described as a mediator or a committee chairman. Not only were massive schisms forming between the Popular Unity and the National and Christian Democratic Parties, schisms were also forming within the UP coalition itself, leading to lack of political cohesion and anarchy.

Disunion was also occurring at the societal level. Instead of uniting all social classes into one cohesive society, as per Marxist doctrine, Allende's Chilean Way was fracturing classes and pitting them against each other and the government. This occurred immediately after Allende was elected with the mass exodus of Chile's upper class. They feared that what would follow would be a Castro-like restructuring of power in Chile.¹²³ Later some of these people returned after realizing the opposition was preventing the concentration of Allende's power. The expropriation of the Chilean mines from the United States damaged the incomes of the upper class people in Chile due to their dependence on the revenue making them wholly dependent on foreign capitalist. The absorption of the banks by the Allende administration further damaged the Chilean upper class in that it inhibited them from maintaining control of their capital holdings.¹²⁴ The Chilean upper class was becoming more and more hostile to the Allende administration and his Popular Unity coalition.

It does not necessarily follow that the people in opposition immediately turned to the coup as the first option to remove Allende from power. There was faith that both Allende and the Popular Unity could be removed from power via the democratic process. For the April 1973 congressional election the Christian Democratic Party and the National Party formed a coalition known in Spanish as the CODE, or Democratic Coalition. The purpose of the CODE was to elect enough members into Congress to pass a

¹²³ Richard E. Ratcliff, "Capitalists in Crisis: The Chilean Upper Class and the September 11 Coup" *Latin American Perspectives* 1 (Summer, 1974), 80

¹²⁴ Ratcliff, 85

resolution declaring the unconstitutionality of Allende's administration and force him to resign.¹²⁵

Allende's and the Popular Unity's policies were unpopular, and as a result received only 44 percent of the vote while the CODE received 55 percent of the vote. However, this was not enough to impeach the president.¹²⁶ This election demonstrated the failure of the democratic process to remove Allende from power, from this moment on a coup was implemented.

The coup of September 1973 was a long time coming relying on the slow unification of the military against the Allende administration. A demonstration of this was *El Tanquetazo* or "Tank Putsch" which occurred in June 1973 whereby as the name implies, a faction of the military, associated with the ultra-right wing grassroots organization *Patria y Libertad*/Fatherland and Liberty started an armed rebellion against the Allende administration with tanks.¹²⁷ Upon approaching La Moneda, the presidential palace, the drivers of the tanks ordered the surrender of Allende and his palace guards. The latter replied with a statement saying, "The guard never surrenders, damn it! (*La guardia no se rinde nunca, mierda*)."¹²⁸ The tanks called for the rest of the military to join with them against the Allende administration, but instead of joining them, the Commander in Chief, General Carlos Prats persuaded them to surrender. It should be noted that the organization responsible for this act of rebellion, Fatherland and Liberty was directly sponsored by CIA money which was still being funded covertly. Therefore, any possible statement that the U.S. government knew nothing about the coup against Allende is open for debate. Other acts of terrorism continued to plague Chile during this time such as the bombing of electrical pylons which caused a blackout in Santiago during a speech given by Allende.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Soto, 33

¹²⁶ John L. Rector, *The History of Chile* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2003), 178

¹²⁷ Soto, 35

¹²⁸ Soto, 31

¹²⁹ Goldberg, 111

Dissent in the ranks of government began to wage during this time, after *el Tanquetazo*, as disagreements waged between some military officers who believed that the military should uphold the constitution and support the government and other military officers who believed that the government should forcibly overthrow the Allende government and reconstruct it in their own image. Being incapable of resolving these issues, Carlos Prats then resigned.¹³⁰ Prats' successor, General Augusto Pinochet was named the Commander in Chief of the Army in August soon he led, the military coup, even though he is reported to have initially refused to support it.¹³¹

This fact may play into one of the greatest ironies of the coup: President Allende actually thought Pinochet was loyal to the Chilean government. Allende's aide David Garrido, remembering the day of the coup said, "The President tried to call the commanders and chief, but he couldn't find Pinochet anywhere. [He] couldn't get him on the phone. He was unobtainable. So [Allende] said, 'Poor Pinochet, what's happened to him? What's happened to poor Pinochet? Thinking he was loyal.'"¹³²

Through all of this, the military tried to find a peaceful solution to the coup without violence. This is evidenced by a statement U.S. Ambassador to Chile Nathaniel Davis made in his memoir in which he declared that the military general "went to see Allende again and again, mostly through their commanders-in-chiefs... and asked the President to reconsider his policies...they squirmed, temporized, and looked for ways out and it was a reluctant, uncertain inconclusive process...it was late—only days before the coup—when the armed forces moved collectively beyond the point of no return."¹³³

Kyle Steenland points out the anatomy of the coup in his article stating that the Army's commitment to the coup was the final piece to the puzzle in the movement against the Allende

¹³⁰ Steenland, 14

¹³¹ Rojas Rojas Sanford, *The Murder of Allende: And the End of the Chilean Way to Socialism* (New York, Harper and Row Publishing, 1976) 15-16

¹³² *The Other 9/11*

¹³³ Gustafson, 210

administration because the Navy and the Air Force had been waiting to wage a coup for quite some time.¹³⁴

Steenland also points out the plausibility of the United States military and CIA involvement in the coup. Steenland strengthens this point by citing another military operation codenamed Mission Airstream in which U.S. military aircraft were stationed in Mendoza, Argentina. As part of this mission these American aircrafts flew over Chile from September 7 to September 13. Even though the Nixon administration blatantly denies the existence of the mission, the Chilean Agencia Arauco, confirms the existence of the mission and the names of the pilots.¹³⁵ Steenland also draws on documentation that places 15 U.S. Special Forces soldiers 30 kilometers away from Santiago, Chile on the day of the coup.¹³⁶ Steenland further indicates that a CIA operative was involved in the assassination of Allende's naval aide Commodore Arturo Araya Peters.¹³⁷

In his book, *El Ultimo Dia de Salvador Allende*, Oscar Soto emphatically denies U.S. involvement in the planning of the coup but brings up the issue of possible U.S. military intervention. One of the main points in the second part of Soto's book is that although the United States had nothing to do with the coup itself, it is plausible that the U.S. military was serving as "back up" for the military and was willing to intervene in the coup militarily should the Chilean military fail in its attempt to remove Allende from office.

The basis for Soto's argument can be found on Operation: Unitas, an international cooperative involving U.S. and Chilean naval vessels conducting maneuvers outside of Valparaiso: the first city to be taken in the coup. Soto also states that the Chilean Navy was the first of the military branches to revolt

¹³⁴ Steenland, 14

¹³⁵ Steenland, 19

¹³⁶ Steenland, 21

¹³⁷ Steenland, 22

against the central government by taking Valparaiso and Vina del Mar on the morning of the coup.¹³⁸

Soto then draws his conclusion that Operation: Unitas was a contingency plan for removing Allende from power by saying,

“It is obvious although the American diplomats may deny it considering their belligerent position [against the Allende administration]...[that the U.S. military] would be willing to intervene if the coup failed, [this was] already programmed. [.]”¹³⁹

This point is very well taken considering other plans the U.S. government had implemented for regime change in Latin America such as the various operations to remove the Castro brothers from power in Cuba. The idea that the country’s people would act first and then the U.S. military would intervene if necessary is a cornerstone to these plans.

The points brought up by Soto and Steenland prove that the U.S. had knowledge if not participated in the plan of the coup but it is up for discussion as to how extensive the U.S.’s role was. As for the intention of the Chilean military pertaining to the life of Salvador Allende, Robinson Rojas Sanford draws on documentation that indicated the military wanted Allende dead, whether he killed himself or the military did it for him.

In his book *The Murder of Allende and the End of the Chilean Way to Socialism*, Rojas Sanford outlines several points to show that the military had no intention of keeping Allende alive and that his death would be staged as a suicide whether Allende did it himself or not. In constructing his argument, Rojas Sanford references a document which was allegedly constructed between the Chilean military and the U.S. Army intelligence group outlining two possibilities for Allende’s fate during the coup. This document is connected with other literature pertaining to Alpha Phase One, the first part of the coup whereby Allende would be deposed.

¹³⁸ Soto, 65

¹³⁹ Es obvio, aunque lo nieguen los diplomáticos estadounidenses, considerando la beligerante posición y la flagrante intervención de la CIA y los Servicios Secretos de las Fuerzas Armadas de Estados Unidos realizaban en Chile, que el martes 11 estarían prestos a intervenir si fracasaba el golpe, ya programado. Soto, 67

The first probability was that Allende would be “intimidated by the deployment of armored cars and infantry and under the threat of aerial bombardment would commit suicide before the battle begins.” The second probability states that Allende would “realiz[e] his defenselessness and knowing perfectly well that the civilians are incapable of defending themselves...will surrender. This may happen before or after an aerial bombardment.”¹⁴⁰

In the event of the first probability happening, the military would then continue with what was codenamed “Phase Two” which involved “the disaccreditation [sic] of the suicide’s character, focusing on an image of a drunkard, libertine, and hedonist.”¹⁴¹ In the event of the second probability happening, Allende would be isolated from both civilian and military authorities and escorted to the 2nd Armored Headquarters. While there Allende would be “subject[ed] to humiliation (disrobed, in ridiculous poses... will be forced to commit humiliating acts which will be openly photographed) based on information we have about him. Their traumatic attempt should result in suicide.”¹⁴² The logic behind this tactic is sound, it could be said that the military favored Allende’s death over his exile due to the experience of Argentina’s military in its attempts to oust its leader Juan Domingo Peron. While the military had successfully removed Peron from Argentina, he still maintained control of the country through the unions and grassroots organizations such as the People’s Revolutionary Army. Killing Allende would lower the probability of this civil unrest.

Rojas Sanford’s argument and the documentation he cites clash with a statement made by Pinochet on the day of the coup which was made in a radio communication which was intercepted by a radio hobbyist. To a statement by General Carvajal stating that the military should take Allende and his followers in La Moneda prisoner, Pinochet replied yelling, “My opinion is that those gentlemen take a

¹⁴⁰ Rojas Sanford, 17

¹⁴¹ Rojas Sanford, 17

¹⁴² Rojas Sanford, 18

plane anywhere they want to go, and that includes by the path that they're firing through from below.

La opinión mía es que estos caballeros se toman y se mandan por avión a cualquier parte, e incluso por el camino los van tirando abajo."¹⁴³

The notion of Allende being offered safe passage out of the country is confirmed in Soto's account which occurred during the coup. Soto recalls being approached by Commandante Roberto Sanchez and being told, "Doctor, I have come to offer the president a plane so that he can leave the country. He has refused it. I am going to see if there is a loyal unit. (*Doctor, he venido a ofrecerle un avión al presidente para que salga del país. Lo ha rechazado. Voy a ver si hay una unidad leal.*)"¹⁴⁴

But as Soto repeatedly states in his account, Allende had no intention of leaving. This is evidenced in a statement Soto recalls Allende giving to the people inside La Moneda during the siege which is shown in the excerpt below:

Comrades, the military coup is underway...We do not have any armed forces that are with us...I have taken a lot of time for my decision: I will not surrender, nor will I leave the country, nor will I leave La Moneda. I will fight to the end. I thank you all for the loyalty and the collaboration that you have given me but I tell you that there mustn't be meaningless victims. Most of you have wives and small children. Your duty is with them and the people of Chile. This is not the final battle...I will fight because I have a mandate from the workers and the people that like everything else in my life, I will faithfully fulfill. See Appendix I¹⁴⁵

Soto then recalls the final moments of Allende's life when, after several hours of firing and withstanding air strikes, Soto reported to Allende that military soldiers have taken the first floor of La Moneda to which and were ordering Allende to put down his weapons and surrender.¹⁴⁶ Upon hearing this, Soto recalls Allende walking into the Salon of Independence with his AK-47. Soto recalls being on his way down the stairway to turn himself in when he heard two shots. Soto then recalls running back to the Salon of Independence and seeing that Allende "had fired his weapon on himself [*se ha disparado su*

¹⁴³ Soto, 114

¹⁴⁴ Soto, 74

¹⁴⁵ Soto, 83-84

¹⁴⁶ Soto, 97

metralla” and that his weapon was “still between his legs [*que todavia esta entre sus piernas*]” with his “skull destroyed [*con su craneo destrozado*].”¹⁴⁷

Soto’s account discredits any possible theory that the Allende’s death was an assassination although several people like Rojas Sanford attempt to call it an assassination by pointing out various flaws in the original autopsy report. Rojas Sanford’s attempt at debunking the “suicide” thesis is aimed at the original autopsy report and pointing out its errors. Rojas Sanford also states that Allende’s body was not taken to the morgue after it was recovered by the military. This was because according to a telephone conversation between General Bonilla and Air Force General Nicanor Diaz Estrada the morgue was “a nest of extremists and they may try to steal the body.”¹⁴⁸ Rojas Sanford also adds that the body was secretly transported to the Military Hospital.

The first error Rojas Sanford points out is that the coroner stated that the time of death which was determined at 6:10 p.m. occurred six hours before the autopsy was undertaken. Simple arithmetic concludes that Allende had passed away at 12:10 p.m. at a time when the siege was still happening and two hours before Allende actually died.¹⁴⁹

Another element of Allende’s death that Rojas Sanford points out is the accepted account of his suicide is problematic to physically attempt. The accepted account of Allende’s death is that he held his AK-47 between his legs and pressed the barrel of the rifle under his chin and pulled the trigger. Rojas Sanford rejects this account by virtue of the fact that the physical maneuvering necessary to accomplish such a stance with a rifle like an AK-47 because it is “an ‘uncomfortable’ position of ‘unstable equilibrium ‘frontward.’”¹⁵⁰ Therefore Allende would have to fire the weapon while standing on his toes causing forward momentum to seize his corpse after he died, instead of backwards like he was allegedly found.

¹⁴⁷ Soto, 98

¹⁴⁸ Rojas Sanford, 23

¹⁴⁹ Rojas Sanford, 27

¹⁵⁰ Rojas Sanford, 26

Two of the final elements of the autopsy Rojas Sanford disputes are the alleged amount of alcohol in Allende's bloodstream and the issue of powder burns on Allende's hands. Rojas Sanford automatically states that the "analysis of the skin on the hands and chin show the presence of gunpowder, caused by the use of a firearm"¹⁵¹ passage is invalid due to the fact that Allende was firing the same AK-47 he used to kill himself in the siege against the military. Rojas Sanford then rejects the statement made by the coroner that reads "Allende's body showed a 90% level of alcohol poisoning" because eye witnesses, including Soto, state that Allende was not drinking the day of the attack. Rojas Sanford then concludes that this statement was made in order to support the "drunken President" theory that the military constructed and disseminated to the public.

Steenland complements Rojas Sanford's "assassination thesis" by stating, like Rojas Sanford states, that Allende was killed by a Chilean military officer known as Capitan Garrido and that Allende was killed by three bullets: one of which struck him in the stomach while a fellow soldier shot Allende in the abdomen.¹⁵² This obviously violently clashes with Soto's account stating that Allende went into a secluded room in La Moneda and shot himself. Steenland tries to rectify this discrepancy by hypothesizing that witnesses to the death of Allende were threatened by the military to keep the truth of his death, secret.¹⁵³ The major flaw in this hypothesis is that in the almost forty years since this event, none of the witnesses have reversed themselves on the account of Allende's death.

Allende's death happened nearly forty years ago, the popular rejection of Pinochet's rule was approximately twenty years ago. Any possible threat to exposing the truth of Allende's fate has long since expired and every witness has continued to maintain that Allende committed suicide after telling his compatriots to surrender. If there were a cover up, it is very probable that the truth would come out after the death of Pinochet in 2006, but nothing of the sort has occurred.

¹⁵¹ Rojas Sanford, 32

¹⁵² Rojas Sanford, 1

¹⁵³ Steenland, 15

The hypotheses of this event must therefore be weighed by the credentials of the people who pose them. Soto was Allende's personal physician, a cardiologist by trade, who was physically inside of La Moneda during the assault. Although the publication of his book is roughly thirty years after this event and the validity of his memory can be called into question, Soto's narrative is published after the junta's collapse, at a time when possible backlash for revealing a cover up would be minimal at best. Conversely, Rojas Sanford was a leftist journalist by trade who was in Chile during the time of the coup but however was not at La Moneda on the day of the coup. Rojas Sanford builds his argument using telephone transcripts between military officers as well as documents written by the military during the planning phase of the military coup.

Rojas Sanford's ethos gives the "assassination thesis" more credibility than Steenland. Steenland's ethos is less reputable due to the fact that he was a tenured professor in American Studies at State University at New York in Buffalo who based his data on documents from leftist Chilean organizations, such as the publication for the MAPU. These leftist organizations would naturally have a tainted opinion on the military and the alleged views that the U.S. was involved in the coup. To further damage Steenland's ethos, his citations involving the coup are fragmented and in various places missing; which lends his argument more towards speculation than actual historical theorizing. Nevertheless, his statement does correspond with Rojas Sanford's arguments which are firmly grounded on reputable sources. Their argument clashes with the account of Soto who was an eye witness to the event.

This debate on the actual circumstances of Allende's death has waged over the years. In 2011, Allende's body was exhumed in order to empirically confirm the cause of Allende's death, whether murder or suicide. After an examination, it was confirmed by Spanish forensics expert Francisco Etxeberria that "We have absolutely no doubt [that Allende committed suicide.]"¹⁵⁴ Etxeberria indicates

¹⁵⁴ "Chilean president Salvador Allende committed suicide, autopsy confirms" The Guardian. July 19, 2011.

that Allende's body was assailed by two bullets instead three like Rojas Sanford and Steenland claim, and that these bullets were fired at such an angle that only Allende could have fired them.¹⁵⁵ Therefore Soto's argument can finally be deemed the more valid interpretation to this event while the "assassination thesis" does pose some legitimate questions such as the discrepancies in Allende's original autopsy.

After the death of Allende, the military stepped in, dissolved the Chilean Congress and began to wage terror against suspected leftists who supported the Allende administration. Various torture techniques were used by the military in order to obtain information from the abducted prisoners including "Electric current applied to neck, ear, chest, sexual organs. Blows against the ear until the eardrum bursts. Hoses introduced into the mouth with water forced through them. Tearing out fingernails. Cigarettes used to burn the inner ear. Beatings with rubber clubs. Blows with nails against the teeth. Introduction of needles in the body. Forcing prisoners to run with shoes full of broken glass."¹⁵⁶ Steenland points out that these techniques came from both American and Brazilian sources.¹⁵⁷ This further indicates that the United States may have played a role in the execution of Allende due to the fact that it played a major role in the construction of the junta and the counterrevolution against the "Chilean way to socialism."

The death of Salvador Allende marks the lethal end to a political experiment where a political coalition believed a utopian socialist society could be obtained through the democratic process without a violent uprising of the oppressed lower classes. The failure of this experiment can be marked by both local and international opponents who repeatedly attempted to block Allende from becoming president

155 "Chilean president Salvador Allende committed suicide, autopsy confirms" The Guardian. July 19, 2011.

¹⁵⁶ Steenland, 18

¹⁵⁷ Steenland, 20

and continued to antagonize Allende while he was president. However the crux of the failure of the Chilean Way to Socialism was the fact that its opposition was more unified and organized than Allende's supporters. This can be seen through a combination of the steady decline of the union between the leftist parties who made up the Popular Unity and the steady alignment of the right wing Chilean parties, and the military with financial aid from the United States at the very least.

Allende's unique Marxist theory was an experiment that doomed to failure as evidenced by the United States' efforts to influence Chilean elections, to right wing organizations in Chile threatening coups if Allende won, and to the ultimate demise of Allende on September 11, 1973. Getting the proper coordination and strength to effectively destroy him and his coalition was only a matter of time. After twelve years attempting to be president and another three years on the job, the "Chilean Way to Socialism" finally led to a dead end.

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Appendix I

From Soto, 83-84

Compañeras, y compañeros: el golpe militar esta en marcha... No tenemos fuerzas militares organizadas que estén con nosotros... yo he tomado hace mucho tiempo mi decisión: no renunciare ni me iré del país, ni abandonare La Moneda. Luchare hasta el final. Les agradezco a todos la lealtad y colaboración que siempre me han presentado; pero quiero decirles que no deben haber victimas inútiles. La mayoría de ustedes son jóvenes, tienen mujer e hijos pequeños. Tienen un deber con ellos y con el pueblo de Chile. No es este el último combate... Yo combatiré, porque tengo un mandato de los trabajadores y el pueblo, que, como a través de toda mi vida, cumpliré con lealtad.