

The U.S. Press and Chile, 1964–1973: Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy

La prensa de Estados Unidos y Chile, 1964-1973: Ideología y política exterior de Estados Unidos

A imprensa dos Estados Unidos e Chile, 1964-1973: Ideologia e política exterior dos Estados Unidos

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In this essay I argue that, although the press and public opinion did not exert direct influence on the policies toward Chile of both the Johnson and Nixon administrations, the image of Chile displayed by U.S. news outlets reflected some of the ideological and cultural assumptions of the mainstream Cold War U.S. mentality and contributed to the construction of a public context in which anticommunism, modernization theory and the latter's intellectual roots were legitimate principles in the design of foreign policy. By assessing the coverage of Chilean affairs in the most important mainstream newspapers and news magazines, this essay describes and analyzes the correlation between policies and official attitudes toward Chile and the broader Cold War mindset of American society, thus pinpointing a link that is often assumed but not so frequently explored in depth.

Key words:

Press; Ideology; Images; U.S. Foreign Policy; Cold War; Frei; Allende

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En este trabajo se argumenta que a pesar de que la prensa y la opinión pública no ejercieron una influencia directa en las políticas hacia Chile por parte de los presidentes Johnson y Nixon, la imagen que se desplegó sobre Chile en las noticias reflejó algunos de los razonamientos centrales de la mentalidad de Guerra Fría de Estados Unidos. Esto llevó a la construcción de un contexto público en el que el anti-comunismo y la teoría de la modernidad y sus raíces intelectuales se transformaron en principios legitimadores en el diseño de la política exterior. Haciéndose cargo de la cobertura de los asuntos chilenos en los diarios y revistas de mayor circulación, este trabajo describe y analiza la correlación entre políticas y actitudes oficiales hacia Chile a la vez que la mentalidad de la sociedad estadounidense, estableciendo un vínculo que a menudo se asume sin ser examinado en profundidad.

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Palabras clave:

Prensa; Ideología; Imágenes; Política Exterior de Estados Unidos; Guerra Fría; Frei; Allende.

Neste trabalho argumenta-se que apesar de que a imprensa e a opinião pública não exerceram uma influência direta nas políticas para o Chile por parte dos presidentes Johnson e Nixon, a imagem que se desdobrou sobre o Chile nas notícias refletiu alguns razoamentos centrais da mentalidade da Guerra Fria dos Estados Unidos. Isso levou à construção de um contexto público no qual o anti-comunismo e a teoria da modernidade e suas raízes intelectuais se transformaram em princípios legitimadores no desenho da política exterior. Dando conta da cobertura dos assuntos chilenos nos jornais e revistas de maior circulação, este trabalho descreve e analisa a correlação entre políticas e atitudes oficiais para o Chile ao mesmo tempo que a mentalidade da sociedade norte-americana, estabelecendo um vínculo, amiúde assume sem ser examinado em profundidade.

Palavras-chave:

Imprensa; Ideologia; Imagens; Política Exterior dos Estados Unidos; Guerra Fria; Frei; Allende.

Ideological Assumptions and U.S. Foreign Policy

As Michael Hunt has pointed out, the relationship between ideology and U.S. foreign policy cannot be discerned easily¹. Unlike the foreign policies of totalitarian regimes such as Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, which related directly to principles explicitly set forth by the ideology of the state, the foreign policy of the United States is the product of complex processes of decision-making, is subject to the constant scrutiny of American citizens, and usually becomes an important issue in domestic political debates and electoral contests². Nevertheless, U.S. foreign policy draws on some ideological assumptions that, although flexible and interpretable, amount to a common language and a widely shared sensibility with which most Americans -including political leaders and policymakers- identify³.

Needless to say, anticommunism was the foremost guiding ideological principle for the United States during the Cold War. As such, it was the main driving force behind U.S. policies towards Chile between 1964 and 1973. To policymakers, diplomats, and most of the press, Salvador Allende was the incarnation of all that was perilous in Cold War Latin America. Consequently, Allende and its leftist coalition were often depicted as threats to the stability of the inter-American system and Chile became a highly relevant matter in the U.S. media between 1970 and 1973. This attitude contrasted sharply with the favorable image that the Frei government and his program of reform had earned among U.S. officials and most of the printed press between 1964 and 1970.

Anticommunism and the Cold War were not the only factors in the construction of images of others and the design of foreign policies in the United States. In the 1950s and early 1960s, U.S. social scientists rationalized some of the deepest ideas held by Americans about themselves and the rest of the world into a theory that purported to present the best and most consistent ideological response to the philosophy of history of Marxism. Modernization theory, as it came to be known, proposed an interpretation of history that set modern capitalism as the final and best expectable stage in the process of historic evolution and, much like Marxism, set forth a

series of steps to be taken in order to reach it. A modern economy would spawn a large and empowered middle class, which in turn, would consolidate the institutions of liberal democracy⁴. Although modernization theory was mainly an abstract product of U.S. academia, it became the most important intellectual principle behind U.S. policies toward the Third World in the 1960s⁵.

Modernization theory, however, was not a brand new set of ideas. It drew heavily on Americans' long-held values and perceptions of themselves and the rest of the world. Modernization theory gave a new intellectual framework to images of national and international history that had deep roots in U.S. society⁶. According to these images, whereas the United States had followed the right path of political, social, and economic progress, most of the rest of the world, and particularly Latin America, had remained in backwardness because it had been unable to break off the shackles of atavism and tradition and build the dynamic yet stable capitalist society that was the benchmark of modernity and universal welfare. Systematized by social scientists and policymakers, these historic images of Latin America became one of the cornerstones of the Alliance for Progress⁷. Along with Cold War anticommunism, the image of Latin America as an unstable, backward and dangerous region in need of urgent modernization became the most important ideological assumption underlying U.S. policies toward the region in general and Chile in particular, before as well as after the heyday of modernization theory.

The Press and Ideological Assumptions

As a mirror and a creator of public opinion, the press is a good source to probe into the ideological assumptions and images of others held by the American people during the Cold War⁸. According to one study, newspaper readership remained between 70% and 80% of the adult population between 1964 and 1973⁹. The outlets assessed in this essay were among the most read and prestigious in the United States (see Table 1)¹⁰. Moreover, some of the media analyzed in this study (*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Time Magazine* and *Newsweek*) were considered among the most trusted sources of information about domestic and foreign policymaking, and international affairs by U.S. political, economic and intellectual elites¹¹. As a consequence, these media actively set the tone of much of the public discourse in the Cold War and the simplified images of foreign realities conveyed to the public by these news outlets constituted a significant part of the intellectual base on which Americans built their worldviews. As William A. Dorman and Mansour Farhang have pointed out in their study of the U.S. press and Iranian politics during the Cold War, mainstream newspapers and magazines created a "highly generalized sense of things: of what [was] required and what [was] not; of who [was] the enemy and who [was] friend. The press [set] the broad limits of our thinking about the "other"¹². This was all the more so when it came to themes of secondary importance to U.S. citizens such as Latin American affairs. In all likelihood, most U.S. citizens did not care much about Latin America and Chile (and most of the rest of the world, for that matter)¹³. Nonetheless, the historic images and analytical tools through which they viewed the region stemmed mostly from the media coverage of and the opinions expressed in the press about Latin American affairs.

Table 1. Average Weekday Circulation of Major U.S. Newspapers

Newspaper	Average Weekday Circulation			
	1964	1967	1970	1973
Los Angeles Times	768,503	847,869	955,915	1,004,908
New York Times	603,574	767,239	899,231	823,935
Chicago Tribune	831,904	832,146	775,416	728,760
Washington Post	422,145	440,762	486,422	519,795
Miami Herald	325,451	359,959	380,828	354,408
Atlanta Constitution	200,642	199,197	203,984	214,591
Christian Science Monitor	174,093	192,399	213,964	187,897

Source: *Editor & Publisher Yearbook* (1964, 1967, 1970 and 1973 editions).

The United States and Chile, 1964-1973

From 1963 through 1973, the U.S. government waged in Chilean politics one of its many Cold War battles. Overtly, the Johnson administration, out of typical Cold War assumptions and sympathy for social reform in Latin America, provided considerable amounts of financial aid and political support to its Chilean counterpart, the government of the Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei Montalva. After Johnson was succeeded by Richard Nixon in 1969, and Frei by the Socialist Salvador Allende in 1970, the state of affairs changed dramatically. The lavish American financial support to Chile decreased sharply, and the political tension between both governments reached probably the highest point in the history of U.S-Chilean relations. While all this happened in public, the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States carried out covert operations in Chile to prevent Allende from becoming president in 1964 and 1970. Allende, whose Marxist credentials raised deep concerns among U.S. officials, was defeated by Frei in 1964, but obtained a plurality in the presidential election of 1970. After a tense two-month period between the popular election and his inauguration day, Allende took office as President of Chile on 3 November 1970. Nevertheless, the CIA covert operations did not stop. The CIA continued to finance political parties, newspapers, and other social and political organizations

that opposed the Allende government. Covert operations in Chile came to an end only after Allende was overthrown by a military coup in September of 1973.

In U.S. policymakers' minds, the nuances and particularities of Chile's political situation were always subsumed under the larger picture of world politics. The U.S. involvement in Chilean affairs was primarily an outgrowth of the Cold War. The specific means of that involvement were determined by Chile's belonging to Latin America and the Western Hemisphere. Both the Johnson and Nixon administrations assumed that the U.S. government had to do something in Chile because it was located within the U.S. sphere of hegemony (or empire)¹⁴. However, Chile's geographical location and political history made it unthinkable for U.S. policymakers to entertain thoughts of interventions like that carried out in the Dominican Republic in 1965¹⁵. Consequently, U.S. policies toward Chile during this period comprised covert financial support for the non-Marxist forces and overt support for reformist policies. The strategy fit into the spirit of the Alliance for Progress and the Cold War pattern of U.S. involvement in Western Hemisphere politics¹⁶.

U.S. Foreign Policy and the Press

Unlike other hot spots of U.S. foreign policy such as the Vietnam War, U.S.-Latin American relations were of little interest to the vast majority of the American people. As a result, U.S. policies toward Chile over this nine-year period were mostly designed within a public framework that exerted little pressure on the U.S. government. There are no polls that tell us how Americans viewed Chile and its relations with the United States over this time period and presidential candidates did not bring up Latin American themes as campaign issues in the elections of 1964, 1968 and 1972. However, U.S. newspapers, news magazines, and political journals covered Chilean politics from 1964 through 1973 consistently, informing about various specific issues and often expressing strong opinions on the ideological debates that took place in Chile. Even though the public itself was only shallowly aware of events in the Southern Cone country, press coverage and its ideological assessment of Chilean politics allow for the consideration of Chile as a topic within the realm of U.S. public opinion on international affairs.

Despite the fact that Chile and its relations with the United States were of little importance to the U.S. public and of rather secondary relevance for the U.S. press, some links between official policymaking and the public views represented by the press did exist. The most conspicuous example was the Congressional investigation on the relationship between ITT and the CIA regarding Chilean affairs triggered by the publication of some documents by Jack Anderson in *The Washington Post* in 1972. However, the practical effects of the controversy set off by Anderson's denunciations were felt only after Richard Nixon resigned in 1974.

Another dimension of the relationship between official policies and the press was the use of the latter by the CIA in its covert actions in Chile. From 1964 through 1973, one of the most important aspects of the agency's operations in Chile was the creation of anti-Marxist propaganda and its diffusion through news agencies, newspapers, magazines, and radio broadcasts throughout

the country. After the presidential election of 1970, the CIA and the State Department sought to spread the anti-Marxist and anti-Allende propaganda throughout all Latin America and Western Europe¹⁷. According to the Congressional committee that investigated CIA covert operations in Chile, over the six-week period between the presidential election of 1970 and Allende's inauguration day, "726 articles, broadcasts, editorials, and similar items directly resulted from Agency activity"¹⁸. Although this propaganda was meant to be publicized in Latin America and Western Europe, it is highly probable that the CIA used news agencies such as UPI and AP for that purpose. If that was so, many stories published by the U.S. press may have actually been written by CIA agents or journalists associated with the agency. Furthermore, later Congressional probes on CIA covert action in Chile proved that, at least once, an American magazine, *Time*, obtained information about the Chilean political situation directly from the headquarters of the intelligence agency at Langley. Apparently, the briefing provided by the CIA turned *Time's* originally cautious stance into a more alarmist one. As a result, even before taking office, Allende was portrayed by a *Time* cover story as a "Marxist Threat in the Americas"¹⁹.

The most consistent link, however, was in the ideological assumptions in which both U.S. policymakers and the press grounded their approaches to Chilean affairs. Just as policymakers did, the mainstream U.S. press saw Chile through the lens of Cold War politics and Latin America's historic and contingent reality. The broad assumptions that informed U.S. policies toward Chile were roughly the same assumptions made by the majority of the most relevant newspapers and magazines on this issue. In choosing sides, the U.S. government and the U.S. press were mostly in accord. As we shall see, however, those shared broad assumptions did not imply full agreement on what the United States should have done regarding Chilean politics. Nonetheless, since the actions on which the U.S. government and the press did not agree were covert, there was no public fuss about the differences, because those differences became apparent only after 1973. After that fateful year, U.S. involvement in Chilean politics has been amply uncovered and has earned condemnation not only in the United States but in many other places all over the world. However, over the period between 1964 and 1973, the only events that U.S. public opinion was aware of were those that comprised the overt policies toward Chile. The historic and contingent ideas about Chilean affairs held by most of the press and U.S. government officials were remarkably similar. In a broad sense, the ideological Cold War was defined and waged by both the U.S. government and the press. On that loose and implicit ideological agreement the U.S. government could and did rely to fight many Cold War battles, one of which took place in Chile from 1964 through 1973.

Underlying Assumptions: Chile in the Latin American Context

Two days before the Chilean Congress elected Salvador Allende as President of Chile for the term 1970-1976, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger sent to Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs U. Alexis Johnson a memorandum outlining a public statement on Chile and its new administration. The statement's second and last paragraph read:

Few nations have more justification for pride in political and intellectual freedom than Chile. That nation has in the past contributed to a very high degree to the furtherance of the inter-American system. We would, therefore, hope that Chile will not violate its own democratic and western tradition, and certainly all the American nations will be anxious to determine whether the policies which the new government pursues will permit the continuation of the constructive relationships which Chile and the nations of the Hemisphere have so long enjoyed²⁰.

In terms of concrete policy these words amount to little more than a careful expression of a cool stance and a subtle warning for the future. In addition, Kissinger's actual attitude toward Chile hardly complied with the ideas stated in this document. However, the underlying assumptions that inform the statement are not bereft of any meaning. Since it was meant to be a public statement, its wording aimed at representing the way in which the Nixon administration wanted to be seen regarding its relations with the Allende government. The message was clear: Chile had hitherto gone down the road of the free, democratic, and western tradition, something of which few other nations could be proud. Any departure from that way would stir opposition in the United States and the rest of the hemisphere. Unlike many other Latin American nations, Chile had a long tradition of stability to which it could and should hold on to prevent any dangerous disruption.

A handful of other government documents also point out the rather exceptional characteristics of Chile's political tradition. In 1965, William G. Bowdler, member of the National Security Council Staff, advised McGeorge Bundy that the United States could "hardly do less for a strong democracy like Chile than we do for shaky constitutional government in Colombia and a de facto government in Brazil"²¹. In 1969, the embassy in Santiago sent to the State Department a lengthy report on the Chilean armed forces that basically pointed out their "more European background" and "more apolitical orientation" than other armed forces' in Latin America²². In April of 1964, five months before the election in which Eduardo Frei defeated Salvador Allende, the embassy in Santiago informed the State Department that in the event of an Allende victory, a military takeover would be unlikely because of "[a] strong democratic tradition which prevails in [the] great majority [of] presently politically aware Chileans"²³. The records of the Department of State show countless reiterations of visions of this kind.

The actual weight of these assumptions in the design of American policies toward Chile is hard to measure. In some cases, these favorable views of Chile's political system compelled U.S. policymakers to treat Chile as an example of what the United States expected from Latin America. In more tense moments, the apolitical stance of the Chilean armed forces could elicit more contemptuous comments from U.S. officials. A fortnight after the election of 4 September 1970, in a cable sent to Undersecretary Alexis Johnson, Ambassador in Santiago Edward Korry called the Chilean military "a union of toy soldiers" for their unwillingness to do something to prevent Allende from being elected president²⁴. The apolitical and non-interventionist stance of the military, a cornerstone of Chile's political stability, was not so pleasing when the possibility of a Marxist becoming president was certain.

However the views about Chile's exceptionally stable political system influenced U.S. policy making, it is clear that those assumptions were common among U.S. diplomats and policymakers and constituted an important part of the intellectual ground on which U.S. policies toward Chile were designed. Furthermore, those assumptions said much about views of Chile among American officials, but they also said a great deal about general views of Latin America held in the United States. If Chile had a tradition of democracy and institutional stability, most Latin American countries were identified with the frequent rule of strongmen, constant social turmoil, and a tradition of military intervention in politics. Although both images were rough and, to some extent, mistaken generalizations of much more complex historical situations, the stark contrast made up much of the U.S. attitude toward Chile.

Most U.S. newspapers and news magazines also held views of Chile as a sort of exception to Latin American patterns. A sample of statements about Chile and Latin America found in the printed press illustrates the point: "Chileans are probably the least militaristic people in South America [...] and they are, by and large, the most honest of Latins in their governmental dealing. [...] Chile is one of the most politically sophisticated and mature nations in the world, and Chileans know it" (*New York Times*, 1 February 1967); "In all of Latin America no country is more wholeheartedly and vigorously democratic than Chile" (*Washington Post*, 11 March 1969); "[Chile has been] long the exemplar of democracy in South America" (*Miami Herald*, 6 September 1970); "[Chile] has had a democratic image beyond its frontiers unshared by any other Latin American nation. That image springs from a remarkable political stability which Chile has enjoyed, with few interruptions, for 140 years" (*Los Angeles Times*, 23 October 1970); "Chile [...] has been for so long a bulwark of democratic practice, fair play, and decency in Latin America" (*Christian Science Monitor*, 12 October 1971); "[The armed forces in Chile] have operated in a manner unusual in Latin American countries: They have served the elected leadership, whether they agreed with it or not. They have refrained from any move toward a military takeover and have worked to gain solutions rather than promote violence. In doing so, they have helped preserve a venerable democracy" (*Chicago Tribune*, 23 August 1973)²⁵; "In the mercurial world of Latin American politics, Chile has been a conspicuous exception. Though most Chileans follow politics with an ardor usually reserved for soccer, their passion has been tempered by a strong democratic tradition" (*Newsweek*, 10 August 1970); "Unlike its Latin American neighbors, [Chile] has a record of democratic stability and honest elections dating back to 1932" (*Time*, 7 September 1970).

The image of Chile as an exception to the Latin American pattern traversed the whole spectrum of political sensibilities among the mainstream press and spanned the entire period between 1964 and 1973. The description of Chile as an exception to the Latin American reality was not the core of the information about Chile provided by the press, but it was one of the most common comments that preceded any news or opinion about Chilean politics. Since neither Latin America nor Chile was among the foremost concerns of the U.S. press, the sort of generalization represented by these views constituted the most accessible and manageable source of knowledge about Chilean and Latin American politics in the United States. Chile's purported exceptional characteristics are less important than what their constant mention means. Latin American countries were mostly seen in the United States as economically underdeveloped, socially restless, and politically unstable. By and large, Chile had not experienced as many disruptive events as its continental neighbors. As a

consequence, newspapers and magazines covered Chilean developments with a level of attention different from that paid to most of Latin America, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Although not determined by any direct link, there was a degree of correlation between the coverage of the press, in quality and quantity, and policies toward Chile. One of the commonalities between American officials' views and those of the mainstream press was the special consideration that Chile enjoyed among them, and the dim image of Latin America in the United States. Because of Chile's exceptional image, U.S. policymakers and diplomats dreaded with especial intensity the possibility of the electoral victory of a Marxist, for such development could have repercussions well beyond the Southern Cone. The press, for its part, shared and reinforced this view of Chile as an exceptional nation and an important Cold War battlefield, thus contributing to the sense of urgency that underlay U.S. policies toward and operations in the South American country from the 1964 election to the 1973 military coup.

Eduardo Frei and the “Revolution in Liberty”

Although three candidates ran in the Chilean presidential election of 1964, the actual contest was between two of them, Eduardo Frei Montalva of the Christian Democratic Party and Salvador Allende of the Socialist Party. The foremost aim of the U.S. government was to defeat Allende, a popular and experienced Marxist politician who had a good chance of winning the election. The most important aspect of the U.S. involvement in Chilean politics was the CIA's funding of Eduardo Frei's candidacy in the presidential election. The agency, through proxy organizations and people that did not let the official hand be seen, contributed nearly \$3 million to Frei's campaign²⁶. Given the importance that Chile had in the Latin American political picture for the U.S. government, covert action went on after Frei's election. In all the elections held in Chile during the Frei administration (Congressional elections in 1965 and 1969, Municipal elections in 1967, and a number of Congressional by-elections), the CIA provided funding for candidates of various political parties, ranging from the right-wing National Party to the splinter Socialist Popular Union. According to the Congressional Subcommittee that probed the CIA operations in Chile, the agency handed nearly \$600,000 to Chilean political parties from 1965 through 1969, all approved during the Johnson administration²⁷.

The U.S. press also deemed the race between Frei and Allende a momentous event in the political history of the Western Hemisphere. On 1 September 1964, three days before the election, the *Christian Science Monitor* straightforwardly expressed its choice: “More than just voting for a candidate, in Eduardo Frei, Chileans will be voting for democracy and freedom.” More tepidly, the *Los Angeles Times* considered that the election of Allende “would prove a serious blow to U.S. prestige throughout the Southern Hemisphere and to other American backed projects such as the already troubled Alliance for Progress” (4 September 1964). After the election, the *Chicago Tribune* played the Castro card in welcoming Frei's triumph: “[An Allende victory] would have turned Chile into another Cuba” (8 September 1964); so did the *Atlanta Constitution*: “Chalk up another blow against Fidel Castro's ambitions in this hemisphere” (19 September 1964). To the *New York Times*, by electing Frei, “the people of Chile again proved their devotion to democratic methods” (6 September 1964). *Time* also commended Chile's people for their decision and expressed

relief for the timely prevention of another Cuba in the hemisphere: "In a striking manifestation of democracy, Chile's voters overwhelmingly rejected Allende, rejected all the talk of Cuban-styled socialism, rejected all the Communists and leftists who supported him" (11 September 1964). *Newsweek* also stressed the importance of the Chilean election and joined the laudatory chorus for its outcome: "With the exception of the U.S. election this November, Chile's poll was generally considered to be the hemisphere's most crucial in years. [...] By voting for reform rather than revolution, Chileans have given democracy a resounding affirmation in the Americas" (19 September 1964). Of course, the officials directly involved in the covert actions that helped Frei also rejoiced in the success of the operation. In a 303 Committee meeting a few days after the election, McGeorge Bundy said that all people involved in the successful actions carried out in Chile should be given commendation. Letting the arrogance of the hegemon show, the Director of the CIA John McCone added "that the voters, themselves, in Chile deserved some commendation for the high number of the electorate voting and the very few votes that were invalidated"²⁸. The nearly unanimous opinion, among both policymakers and the mainstream press, was that, at a crucial crossroads, Chile had made the right decision.

Frei's victory was far preferable to the triumph of an avowed Marxist. However, to the U.S. government and most of the press, Frei was more than just the lesser of two evils. His "Revolution in Liberty" was a strong call for change in Chilean society and, consequently, his political adversaries were on the Marxist left as well as on the traditional right. The U.S. government did not ignore this fact. Indeed, in the spirit of the Alliance for Progress, before and after Frei's election, the Johnson administration was considerably supportive of the policies proposed and carried out by the Christian Democratic government. The amount of aid given to Chile throughout Frei's presidential term is a good sign of that support: only the Dominican Republic and Panama, two countries in which direct American involvement was high, received more financial aid from the United States from 1965 through 1970. Although the immediate aim of supporting Frei was preventing a Marxist electoral victory in Chile, the reformist program behind the "Revolution in Liberty" in and of itself garnered the favorable attitude of the Johnson administration²⁹.

Whereas the attitude of the U.S. government toward Chile's reformist government was supportive, most of the press viewed Eduardo Frei and his "Revolution in Liberty" as one of the best and last hopes for Latin America³⁰. Much like the official attitudes, these favorable views held by the press stemmed from Frei's victory over an avowedly Marxist coalition in a momentous election. However, equally significant for these favorable attitudes toward Frei's program was a widespread sense among the U.S. press—and most likely among U.S. society as a whole—that Latin America badly needed profound economic and social reforms. In these matters, Chile was not as exceptional as it was regarding political stability.

A stark description of what Latin America looked like to many Americans was given by columnist George Boswell in the *Atlanta Constitution* in 1966: "Today Latin America is a land of contrast. Its ruling class lives in an atmosphere of the past. Its political institutions in the main are based on an exploitation of the land and masses of the people. The latter largely are illiterate. The landed aristocrats have used religion, military dictatorships and ignorance to maintain themselves in power. Great fortunes are stored in Europe and elsewhere instead of being invested in the

advancement of their own development and their own people”³¹. As a consequence, the Chilean thirst for radical reform was understandable and commendable. The *New York Times* deemed Chile’s “need for a revolution” great (9 March 1965) and the agrarian reform “badly needed” (18 July 1967). The *Washington Post* enthusiastically compared the spirit of Chile’s reformist experiment with the American public atmosphere of the 1930s: “[Frei’s] “revolution in liberty” means to be what it says: a revolution, and it is a program for Chile, not a program to please Americans, and certainly not those Americans who have yet to reconcile themselves to the revolution that took place in this country in the 1930s” (9 March 1965). Other media took a strong stance against the Chilean oligarchy, blaming it for the state of underdevelopment in which Chile still remained and, consequently, for the rise of Marxist revolutionary forces in the political sphere (*Christian Science Monitor*, 9 September 1964). Besides praising Frei’s strong pro-Western stance, the *Los Angeles Times* also commended its “[threatening] the right which has never given up its struggle, vainly defending ground it must ultimately lose.” (2 November 1964). *Newsweek* resorted to an easier qualification, greeting Frei’s reformism as a necessity for “Chile’s near-feudal economic and social order” (14 September 1964). The enemies against which Frei was waging his just war did not come only from the red front; equally threatening was the peril entailed by the reactionary forces of the traditional ruling classes. The “Revolution in Liberty” proposed by the Chilean Christian Democrats was not only a wise strategy to stave off a Marxist revolutionary takeover, but also the right way to free the country from the oppressive shackles of an old and dated order.

The Frei government also elicited praise for its groundbreaking policies as to the nationalization of U.S. business assets, a thorny topic that in the 1960s was at its height. Instead of taking over the copper mines owned by U.S. corporations, the Frei government negotiated with the companies and eventually associated with them in terms favorable for both the Chilean government and the U.S. interests³². Since other situations regarding American interests abroad had been much more traumatic (i.e. Peru’s takeover of the International Petroleum Corporation assets in 1968), the middle way chosen by the Chilean government seemed to offer the best solution for a problem that would come along some day, anyway. The *New York Times*, a staunch advocate of such policy, devoted six editorials to this issue, all of them highly laudatory.³³ Even though the number may not look impressive in absolute terms, it is necessary to remember that Latin America was a rather secondary issue for the U.S. press and Chile’s policy toward copper was a very specific topic. *The Washington Post* also lauded the deal made by Chile and the American companies and also stressed its importance for the future of the relations between the United States and the rest of the hemisphere (28 June 1969). The “Chileanization” of copper, as the policy was christened by the Christian Democrats, was one of the reformist ideas that, before many U.S. eyes, made the Frei government a model to be imitated by the rest of Latin America.

Frei and his “Revolution in Liberty” enjoyed a great deal of sympathy from U.S. officials and the U.S. press because his political project fit well with the liberal philosophy of history that characterized American Cold War ideology. Not only did Frei and the Christian Democrats oppose the illiberal nature of Communism, but they also offered the best way to progress toward economic and social development within the framework of capitalism and political stability. Nevertheless, the failure of the Christian Democrats to capitalize on Frei’s relative success and indisputable popularity turned the 1970 presidential election into another highly polarized contest. The eventual

triumph of Allende at the polls prompted President Nixon and National Security Adviser Kissinger to involve themselves in the process of policy and decision making regarding Chile and highlighted the tensions between the liberal ideals of democracy and respect for institutional stability, on the one hand, and the supposed problems posed by the existence of a Marxist government in a country within the United States' sphere of hegemony.

The election of 1970 turned out to be even more decisive than that of 1964. The Chilean Constitution did not allow Frei to run for reelection, so the Christian Democratic Party chose as its candidate former ambassador in Washington Radomiro Tomic, a man whose political views were considerably to the left of Frei's. The right, which had been believed to be politically dead after the presidential election of 1964 and the parliamentary elections of 1965, raised the candidacy of former president Jorge Alessandri Rodríguez. The Socialist-Communist coalition, the Popular Unity, presented Salvador Allende for the fourth time as its candidate, promising that if he were elected, his government would begin paving the "Chilean Road to Socialism." Despite the acknowledged importance of the election, covert actions were not as carefully planned as those carried out in the 1964 election. As a result, Allende's victory in the election of 4 September 1970 triggered a hasty and outrageous response from the Nixon government, precisely because the President himself took charge of the situation.

Since none of the candidates got a majority, Congress had to hold a runoff election between the two candidates with the highest totals of votes, Allende and Alessandri. The Congressional meeting had to be held fifty days after the popular vote, on 24 October 1970. Among government officials there was no agreement as to the actual degree of peril entailed by the election of an avowed Marxist as president of Chile. An intelligence report issued by the CIA on 7 September 1970 concluded that:

[1. The U.S. has no vital national interests within Chile. There would however, be tangible economic losses. 2. The world military balance of power would not be significantly altered by an Allende government. 3. An Allende victory would, however, create considerable political and psychological costs: a. Hemispheric cohesion would be threatened by the challenge that an Allende government would pose to the OAS, and by the reactions that it would create in other countries. We do not see, however, any likely threat to the peace of the region. b. An Allende victory would represent a definite psychological set-back to the U.S. and a definite psychological advance for the Marxist idea.³⁴

Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs U. Alexis Johnson and Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Charles Meyer advocated a hands-off position regarding Chile because the turmoil following any American attempt to prevent Allende from taking office would be more detrimental for U.S. interests than an Allende government itself³⁵. National Security Council staffer Viron Vaky argued that any intervention in Chile would "patently [be] a violation of our own principles and policy tenets. [...] If these principles have any meaning, we normally depart from them only to meet the gravest threat to us, e.g., to our survival. Is Allende a mortal threat to the US? It is hard to argue this"³⁶.

President Richard Nixon, nevertheless, adopted a far more hawkish position. His instructions to the Director of the CIA on 15 September 1970, according to the handwritten notes taken by Helms, were to “save Chile;” use for that purpose “our best men;” spend as much as \$10,000,000 and more, if necessary; circumvent the embassy in Santiago; and “make the economy scream”³⁷. Two days after the meeting, the CIA turned on “Project Fubelt,” a plan aimed at preventing Salvador Allende from being elected president in the runoff congressional election of 24 October. The two legs of the plan, known as Track I and Track II failed miserably. Indeed, the assassination of the Chief of the Army René Schneider by plotters that had received material and moral support by the CIA prompted the Chilean people and political elites to rally behind the constitutional process and strengthened Allende’s position in the congressional runoff.

The Nixon administration took a hard position on the possibility of the government of a Marxist coalition in Chile because such event could have repercussions that would go far beyond Chile’s borders. In this sense, the Nixon government acted on the same assumptions as the Johnson administration. According to Henry Kissinger,

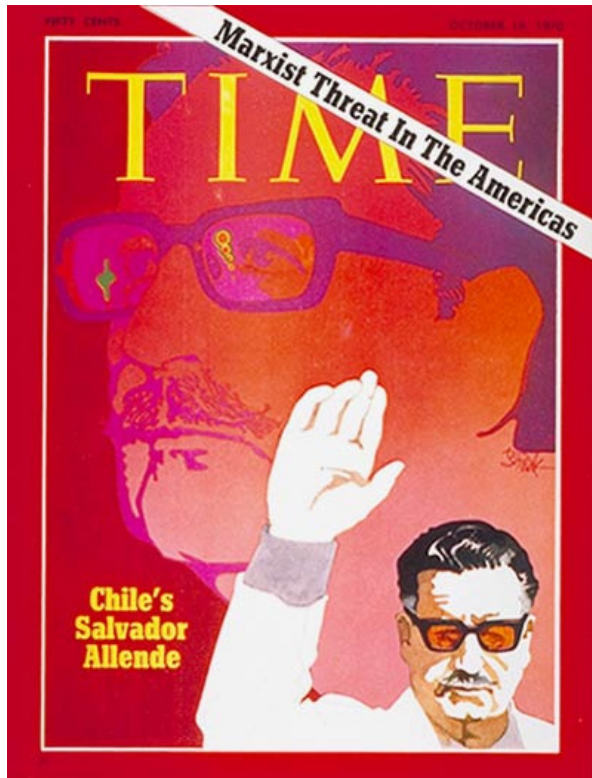
*The election of Allende as President of Chile poses for us one of the most serious challenges ever faced in this hemisphere. Your decision as to what to do about it may be the most historic and difficult foreign affairs decision you will have to make this year, for what happens in Chile over the next six to twelve months will have ramifications that will go far beyond just US-Chilean relations. They will have an effect on what happens in the rest of Latin America and the developing world; on what our future position will be in the hemisphere; and on the larger world picture, including our relations with the USSR. They will even affect our own conception of what our role in the world is*³⁸.

Though the language used is very loaded and the conclusions may seem exaggerated, the general lines of the message are not very different from those along which officials of the Johnson administration assessed the election of 1964. Actually, one can speculate that given the considerable amount of money spent and the huge efforts made for Frei in the Chilean election of 1964, an Allende victory would have been received even more bitterly than in 1970.

The presidential election of 1970 resembled that of 1964 in the attention that it elicited and the ideological choices at stake in it. However, since the outcome was the opposite of that yielded by the election of 1964, the reaction of the U.S. press was completely different. Six years before, Frei had defeated his Marxist opponent by proposing a promising path of reform. Relief and hope constituted the response of the U.S. government and most of the press to Frei’s victory. In 1970, the victory of a Marxist candidate could not but provoke the opposite: disappointment, alarm, fear. If Frei was a good possible alternative to Marxism in Latin America, Allende was the incarnation of an actual threat to the Western Hemisphere. A few days before the election, the *New York Times* warned that the effects of an Allende victory “on Chile and throughout the Americas, would be cataclysmic” (27 August 1970). The *Christian Science Monitor* went even further in its assessment of Allende’s election: “It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the election of an avowed Marxist as President of Chile may be the most important political event in the Western hemisphere of this 20th century. (...) This is the first time in world history that a Marxist has come to power through the democratic electoral process” (30 October 1970). The preoccupation of the

Christian Science Monitor was shared by nearly all mainstream newspapers and magazines in the United States. From 4 September 1970 onwards, nearly every news, column, report, and editorial on Chilean politics pointed out the fact that Allende would be the first avowed Marxist to be elected president in a democratic election in the Western Hemisphere. The assertion rapidly became a formula to describe how high were the stakes that the United States and the Western Hemisphere had in Chilean events. During the brief period between the popular election of 4 September 1970 and the congressional runoff election of 24 October 1970, the language of the Cold War was more significant than ever in the U.S. press coverage of Chilean affairs.

Most newspapers and magazines did not conceal their worries about a Marxist becoming president by democratic means. The *New York Times* described the Allende victory at the polls on 4 September 1970 as “a heavy blow at liberal democracy” (6 September 1970). *The Washington Post* brought up specters of past Communist takeovers: “It is essential that Mr. Allende make



a pledge [to keep the democratic system intact] and even more essential that he move immediately to honor it by throwing his weight against those of his followers who, in his name, are threatening to turn Chile 1970 into Czechoslovakia 1948” (22 September 1970). The most conservative of the newspapers assessed in this essay, the *Chicago Tribune*, chose a more sarcastic way to express its criticism and skepticism: “If [...] Dr. Allende succeeds in turning Chile into a classic Marxist economic state, without curtailing political and social freedom in the process, and if Chile later votes to remain Marxist in a free election, then—well, we’ll eat our sombrero” (9 September 1970). The most impressive display of concern, however, was the cover of *Time Magazine* on 19 October 1970, which openly presented Allende as a threat, apparently following the

lines of the information provided to the magazine directly by the CIA³⁹. Much like Nixon, Kissinger and most U.S. officials involved in the process of decision-making regarding Chile, most of the press saw Allende and his ideological commitments as actual dangers for the political order of the Western Hemisphere, even before his assumption of the presidency.

After Allende took office on 3 November 1970, Nixon decided that the “public posture of the United States [would] be correct but cool, to avoid giving the Allende government a basis on which to rally domestic and international support for consolidation of the regime; but that the United States [would] seek to maximize pressures on the Allende government to prevent its consolidation and limit its ability to implement policies contrary to U.S. and hemisphere interests”⁴⁰. Consequently, economic aid to Chile would be heavily reduced and the United States would seek

to influence international institutions' decisions on credits to be granted to Chile. Covert actions went on funding opposition parties, newspapers, and other social organizations (including a semi-fascist group, *Patria y Libertad*). Historian Jonathan Haslam has said that the Nixon administration ordered the Pentagon to plan along with the Chilean military the coup that overthrew Allende in 1973. Unfortunately, there are no documents that prove this assertion, and Haslam relies only on anonymous "authoritative sources"⁴¹. So far, documentary evidence shows that the involvement of the United States in Chilean affairs was deep, but stopped short of orchestrating the military coup of 1973, as the more ideological literature about the matter has proposed ever since.

The importance of the Allende government among U.S. newspapers can be best grasped by looking at some quantitative data. During Frei's presidential term Chile was little above the rest of the Latin America countries in terms of quantity of news and op-ed articles. After the presidential election of 1970, Chile's quantitative presence in the American press increased substantially (see table 2).

Table 2. News, reports, and op-ed articles about Chilean politics in American newspapers 1 September 1964 - 11 September 1973

NEWSPAPER	News of Chile 1 Sep. 64' - 31 Aug. 70'	News of Chile 1 Sep. 70' - 11 Sep. 73'	News of Chile per week 1 Sep. 64' - 31 Aug. 70'	News of Chile per week 1 Sep. 70' - 11 Sep. 73'
Chicago Tribune	110	221	0.35	1.40
Christian Science Monitor	126	168	0.40	1.06
Los Angeles Times	186	412	0.59	2.61
The New York Times	465	584	1.48	3.69
The Washington Post	238	399	0.76	2.52

The amount of news may be sign of a much more pronounced attention to Chilean affairs coming from an ideological predisposition of the U.S. press toward a government headed by a Marxist president. Undoubtedly, much of that predisposition existed. However, the likely political bias against an Allende government cannot be fully seen through this specific figure. After all, a Marxist elected president through democratic means was in itself a novelty that warranted the closest attention. Besides, the Allende government was much more eventful than its predecessor, and the frequent political crises, the important decisions in foreign policy, and the social turmoil into which Chile slipped as Allende's tenure went on were all newsworthy developments.

However, other figures show that the advent of the Allende government was more than simply a newsworthy event for the U.S. mainstream press. News magazines such as *Time* and *Newsweek* made Chile their principal Latin American subject (see table 3). Likewise, most of the

mainstream newspapers devoted not only news coverage, but also a considerable number of editorials to events in Chile during the Allende government. Almost needless to say, only a few of those editorials were neutral or favorable. Since editorials not only address what is newsworthy, but also what is considered publicly relevant by the press, it is clear that the Allende government elicited attention not only because of its uniqueness but also for its importance in the interest of the U.S. public (see table 4).

**Table 3. News of Chilean and Latin American politics in Time and Newsweek
 September 1964 - September 1973**

News of Latin America/issue	Newsweek				Time			
	0.75				1.013			
	Sep. 1964 - Aug. 1970		Sep. 1970 - Sep. 1973		Sep. 1964 - Aug. 1970		Sep. 1970 - Sep. 1973	
	News	% of Total Latin American News	News	% of Total Latin American News	News	% of Total Latin American News	News	% of Total Latin American News
Chile	18	6.55	33	40.24	21	5.63	31	28.97
Argentina	22	8.00	12	14.63	29	7.77	20	18.69
Bolivia	18	6.55	4	4.88	23	6.17	4	3.74
Brazil	40	14.55	6	7.32	57	15.28	7	6.54
Colombia	5	1.82	0	0.00	12	3.22	2	1.87
Costa Rica	1	0.36	1	1.22	1	0.27	3	2.80
Cuba	29	10.55	8	9.76	44	11.80	8	7.48
Dominican R.	32	11.64	0	0.00	40	10.72	0	0.00
Ecuador	5	1.82	1	1.22	6	1.61	1	0.93
El Salvador	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.27	0	0.00
Guatemala	7	2.55	0	0.00	9	2.41	1	0.93
Haiti	5	1.82	2	2.44	5	1.34	7	6.54
Honduras	2	0.73	1	1.22	0	0.00	2	1.87
Latin America	39	14.18	7	8.54	61	16.35	6	5.61
Mexico	12	4.36	0	0.00	15	4.02	6	5.61
Nicaragua	2	0.73	0	0.00	1	0.27	0	0.00
Panama	10	3.64	1		11	2.95	2	1.87
Paraguay	1	0.36	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Peru	10	3.64	0	0.00	17	4.56	1	0.93
Uruguay	6	2.18	5	6.10	13	3.49	6	5.61
Venezuela	11	4.00	1	1.22	7	1.88	0	0.00

Table 4. Editorials on Chile in American Newspapers, 1 Sep. 1964 - 11 Sep. 1973

Newspaper	Editorials on Chile 1 Sep. 64' - 31 Aug. 70'	Editorials on Chile 1 Sep. 70' - 11 Sep. 73'
Chicago Tribune	2	23
Christian Science Monitor	9	17
Los Angeles Times	3	14
New York Times	20	38
Washington Post	10	14

All the editorial opinions on the Allende government among the mainstream press were decidedly negative. The *Chicago Tribune* was the staunchest opponent of Allende and devoted a high number of editorials to criticizing his administration, even for things that it did not actually do, such as buying arms from the Soviet Union (*Chicago Tribune*, 18 December 1972). Less strident but equally decided opposition was expressed by the *Miami Herald*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *New York Times*, all of which devoted an important number of editorials to addressing critically numerous policies and actions of the Allende government. The *Christian Science Monitor* and the *Washington Post*, though by no means sympathetic to Allende, were milder in their opposition. The most important news magazines - *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report*- adopted critical positions toward the Allende government and, even in a higher degree than newspapers, depicted Chile's reality after the presidential election of 1970 as a situation of constant crisis and social unrest.

Among political journals, *The National Review* was very active in its opposition to the Unidad Popular government. On the other side of the political spectrum, *The Nation* was rather sympathetic to the "Chilean Road to Socialism," which was considered a "reasonable revolution" in an article on Chile published on 1 November 1971. Furthermore, on 29 January 1973, *The Nation* published an article titled "What the Press Leaves Out," which aimed at analyzing and criticizing the seemingly partial way in which the U.S. press had assessed the Allende government. According to the article's author, John Pollock, press coverage of Chilean affairs did not take sufficiently into account the acts of Allende's opponents—Chile's political right, American multinationals with vested interests in the country, and the U.S. government. Thus, the picture presented by the press was partial and inaccurate. Although this view was as ideologically biased as that of the news outlets that opposed Allende, it was partly true. The fact that Allende was a Marxist and his intention was to put Chile on the road to Socialism overshadowed every other characteristic of his administration. As a consequence, most of the U.S. press was eager to find flaws in the Allende government and criticize it implacably.

However, some news outlets that opposed and criticized Allende did so in a constructive way. Conspicuous in this attitude was the *New York Times*, which was probably the most nuanced and even-handed critic of the Allende government among the media. Unlike other newspapers such as the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Miami Herald*, and magazines such as *Time* and *U.S. News & World Report*, the *New York Times* did not base its assessments of Chile's reality on anti-Communist clichés. In fact, the *Times* was the most accurate and prescient interpret of Chile's political situation. Viewing how polarization in Chile quickly intensified, the *New York Times* called

for the Allende government to act more cautiously to avoid a military coup in seven different editorials from March through September 1973⁴². Although in general the *Times* concurred with the simplified views of Latin America held by the U.S. press, because of its traditional internationalist outlook it had a keener sense of where Chile was going and how important a peaceful resolution of the crisis was for the politics of the Western Hemisphere.

On the other hand, to show opposition toward Allende and his government, several news outlets resorted to themes that were in actuality of marginal importance as to political developments in Chile. The *NBC Evening News* of 6 September 1970 introduced Allende to its audience in a scarcely concealed contemptuous tone: “[He] is a physician who never had live patients; he only did autopsies. He drives a sport car, lives in an elegant chalet, wears only the most expensive clothes, and drinks the best whisky. Also, he is the only Marxist who ever won a free election anywhere in the world.” *The National Review* columnist James Burnham, pointing to the fact that Allende did not get a majority in the popular vote, maintained that it was incorrect to say that Allende was the first Marxist to be democratically elected head of state in the world. A better way to picture the situation, according to Burnham, was to describe the victory of Allende as a constitutional one rather than a democratic one. In his attempt to stress the importance of and the dangers entailed by the Chilean developments, the columnist went even further. Allende’s victory made Burnham recall another watershed moment of 20th century history: “In the July 1932 election Adolf Hitler’s percentage of the total vote was within one-tenth of a percentage point of Allende’s total last month, and like Allende’s, higher than that of any other contender. Six months later Hitler became chancellor in accord with the constitutional procedures of the Weimar Republic. The German antirevolutionaries, also, yielded peacefully”⁴³. Once in power, Allende’s radical measures were the main targets of the constant criticism of U.S. newspapers and news magazines. Generally, those critical appraisals aimed at events that were of the foremost importance in Chile itself. However, there also was room for more trivial kinds of criticism. One of the first measures taken by the Allende government was to oblige Chilean radio stations to make up their playlists using at least 40 percent of Chilean songs. Even though the measure did not cause much unrest in Chile, to the *Chicago Tribune* it was simply unacceptable, and gave way to a sarcastic and rather hollow critique of the Chilean president: “We suspect the next step will be a five-year plan setting production goals for Chilean composers. If this fails, perhaps Allende will dispatch some Chilean commandos to kidnap the Beatles” (31 December 1970). When it came to treat an ideological adversary, all rhetorical weapons were useful.

For all the worries brought about by the Allende government in most of the press, all newspapers and magazines considered in this study were explicit in their calling for the United States government not to intervene in Chile in any way. A selection of examples illustrates the point: “All the United States can do in this situation is to keep hands off, behave correctly and hope for the best. (...) The Monroe Doctrine has no relevance here and neither does the Inter-American Defense Treaty. Whatever troubles Chile may face would only be compounded by even the appearance of American interference” (*New York Times*, 6 September 1970); “To confess official disappointment would be regarded—and rightly—as a form of intervention encouraging Chileans of other persuasions to balk at seating Dr. Allende. Respect for Chile’s democratically taken decisions is the only mature course for the United States” (*Washington Post*, 9 September

1970); “The American interest at this point: it seems, would be best served by keeping hands off and letting the Chileans work things out themselves” (*The Los Angeles Times*, 10 September 1970); “Gone are the days of gunboat diplomacy and intervention in the style of 1965 in the Dominican Republic. The Nixon administration has acknowledged its Latin neighbors as equals, and differences with an equal are settled by diplomacy” (*Miami Herald*, 2 November 1970). Although all U.S. interventions in Latin America during the Cold War were unlawful, the possibility of involvement was always latent and openly discussed. Fortunately, the U.S. press unanimously recommended that the Nixon administration not intervene in Chile. Yet the outright presence of the matter among the topics of debate bespeaks a public ideology that, at least subliminally, considered Latin America a region in which intervention was a matter of unilateral choice.

The position of the mainstream press had an ironic side. While the Nixon administration was about to embark on an ill-conceived plot to thwart Allende before he could take office, a number of newspapers were praising the U.S. government for not intervening in Chilean affairs. Before the election of 4 September 1970, the *New York Times* said: “Despite the United States stake in the survival of democracy in Chile, the Nixon Administration has emphatically—and wisely—ruled out any intervention” (27 August 1970). To *the Washington Post*, it was “of more than passing interest to note how detached and proper the United States has been to the Chilean elections of 1970. The prospect which alarmed it deeply six years ago seems about to become a reality now but the United States is keeping its cool” (9 September 1970). On 21 March 1973, journalist Jack Anderson published in *the Washington Post* some documents that revealed the attempts made in 1970 by ITT to prevent Allende from gaining the presidency, of which the most notorious features were the offering of \$1,000,000 to the CIA to achieve that goal and the fact that one of the men who approached the CIA on behalf of the company was John McCone, former director of the agency. Since ITT was already in the eye of the storm for corrupt actions involving government officials and the Allende government was far more critical to U.S. interests than most Latin American governments in the twentieth century, the case elicited a good deal of attention within the U.S. press. The CIA rejected the offer, but the ITT documents uncovered by Anderson showed that the ITT men in Chile were relatively well aware of what both the U.S. embassy and the CIA station in Santiago were doing. Therefore, though not accurately, the documents portrayed a picture in which the presumed aloofness of the U.S. government concerning the election of Allende was dubious. In March 1973, Congress held hearings on the issue of the relationship between multinational corporations, the U.S. Government, and foreign policy. Other than the all-too-tight links between the CIA and ITT, the agency was not directly charged with any improper meddling in Chilean affairs regarding the Allende election⁴⁴. As a consequence, the press went on praising the Nixon administration for keeping its hands off Chile. The *Los Angeles Times* put it as follows: “It is not clear how far the American government leaned toward intervention before deciding against it; but all that really matters is that it did decide against it. [...] For this time, there was no intervention” (26 March 1972). The *New York Times* threw its darts at the CIA: “If a State Department witness is correct in insisting that the official United States policy toward Chile, before and after Dr. Allende’s election, was one of “nonintervention”, it is evident that the C.I.A. once again was conducting its own foreign policy, “going off on a frolic of its own”, as Senator [J. William] Fulbright [D-AR] suggested, and raising anew the question whether there are effective controls over its agents and activities” (3 April 1973). *The Washington Post* blamed the whole affair on the company:

But all witnesses so far have agreed that the United States did not act on the block-Allende proposals. He did take office. So on the basis of this testimony it would be wrong and unfair to accuse the Nixon administration [...] of having tried to keep Mr. Allende from taking power. [...] Note well: any citizen or corporation has a right, within certain limits, to petition his government. But have you ever heard of any citizen or corporation offering the government an extra sum to provide a special service: flouting a foreign government's electoral process at that? It's as though ITT considered the U.S. government to be, well, a multinational corporation, with varied services to sell to various customers. A concept more defiant of democratic government is hard to imagine (24 March 1973).

However, despite the unanimity of the American press in counseling the U.S. government not to intervene in Chile, not everyone regarded the ITT attempts to prevent Allende from becoming president as fully condemnable. Such was the stance of William F. Buckley in his syndicated column "Nice Try Anyway, ITT"⁴⁵. The conservative columnist straightforwardly expressed his wish "that the spirit of ITT were more pervasive." Although a little more tepidly, the *Chicago Tribune* also tried to minimize the guilt of the ITT in the Chilean affair by pointing to responsibilities lying on past U.S. governments: "Businessmen therefore have a proper right to make approaches to the government in defense of their interests. We wouldn't say I.T.T. has taken the most intelligent approach in asserting this right; but it is only fair to remember that I.T.T. and the government might not have been led to invite the present suspicion of secret conspiracy if earlier governments had not conditioned the world to think that American business interests can be kicked around with impunity" (29 March 1973). For some conservative sensibilities, ITT's attitude toward Allende and its reaching out to the CIA were not necessarily inconsistent with the U.S. Cold War ideology.

Epilogue

On 12 September 1973, the *New York Times* published an editorial entitled "Tragedy in Chile." In this piece, the U.S. newspaper of record pointed out that "[the military coup] is especially tragic for Chile, where sturdy democratic machinery had functioned for many years and the armed forces had a strong tradition of keeping to their barracks." Similar views were expressed by the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Miami Herald*⁴⁶. The coup in Chile inflicted significant damage to the dream of many Marxists around the world that Socialism could be established and function within the framework of liberal democracy. In this regard, those in the U.S. government and the press who had attributed great international importance to the Allende experiment were right. Indeed, with the exception of the *Los Angeles Times*, most of the mainstream news outlets blamed the military intervention squarely on Allende and his coalition⁴⁷. Once again, the evaluations of the press did not differ significantly from those of government officials.

However, the tacit ideological agreement between the mainstream press and the U.S. government had its limits. The military coup destroyed the purported threat to the inter-American system posed by the Allende government. Yet the brutality of the military dictatorship that took over and the brazen attempts of Augusto Pinochet to perpetuate his rule proved a far heavier blow to the Chilean democratic tradition. Soon after the coup any optimism as to a quick resumption

of the democratic process vanished and Pinochet himself became a universal icon of repression and tyranny. Whereas the Nixon and Ford administrations cooperated with the Pinochet regime, the U.S. press could not countenance such a blatant disrespect for the tradition that had made it fear and criticize the Allende experiment in the first place. After most of the Nixon administration's deeds in Chile between 1970 and 1973 were uncovered by the Church Committee in 1975, most of the U.S. press turned against the attitude of the U.S. government and most U.S. media became consistent critics of Pinochet. If before 1973 the image of Chile as a democratic and stable country had contributed to make appear Allende as a bigger threat to liberal democracy than he actually was, after the coup that image helped spawn the widespread rejection that Pinochet earned from liberal and democratic quarters all over the world.

Conclusion

Both the Johnson and Nixon administrations devised their policies toward Chile in terms of the U.S. Cold War ideology. The first and foremost goal of the United States regarding Chilean politics was to prevent a Marxist government. After a Marxist candidate was elected president in 1970, the U.S. government changed its overt attitudes toward Chile, but not the tenets that had informed its general policy since the active involvement in Chilean politics had begun in the early 1960s. Except for the rather unintelligent intelligence operations that sought to forestall Allende's victory in the congressional runoff election of October, 1970, the pattern of U.S. relations with and covert operations in Chile was consistent.

U.S. newspapers, magazines, and television news broadcasts were an integral component of the Cold War political culture. Therefore, the broad doctrinal assumptions that informed U.S. policies toward Chile did not differ from those advocated by the press. U.S. public opinion may have been unaware of the specifics of Chilean politics and would probably have been surprised by the importance assigned by the U.S. government to Chile, but it was consistently informed by the press about Chilean affairs in terms that were mostly similar to those embraced as an interpretive framework by policymakers and other officials. Although no direct link can be demonstrated, the similarities between the ideological foundations of U.S. policies toward Chile and the news media's views of Chilean political affairs are apparent. While the U.S. government supported a reformist government and opposed a Marxist one, most American newspapers and news magazines held similar attitudes. Eduardo Frei and his "Revolution in Liberty" were synonymous with hope and earned favorable opinions from most of the U.S. press. On the contrary, Salvador Allende and the Marxist parties that backed him were almost unanimously seen with alarm and elicited a level of public attention that Chilean affairs had never had before in the United States.

Of course, the concrete policies toward Chile carried out by both the Johnson and Nixon administrations had little to do directly with U.S. public opinion. The fact that Chile was only a secondary battlefield of the Cold War allowed for the U.S. government to act with rather ample room for maneuver in Chilean affairs. However, U.S. policies were not completely detached from the views held by non-official public actors. The ideological adversaries that the U.S. government was fighting in Chile were recognized as such by most of the press. Likewise, most newspapers and magazines deemed the reformist forces supported by the Johnson administration as the

best alternative way to revolution in Chile and Latin America. Even the long-term historical assumption that Chile was an exceptional case to the Latin American political pattern of instability was common to both U.S. officials and the press. To be sure, in some specific situations, the U.S. government actions in Chile did run counter to opinions held by the press. While the Nixon administration was deeply involved in plots aimed at preventing Salvador Allende from becoming president, a number of newspapers and magazines were advising that the U.S. government keep its hands off Chile and some of them were indeed praising Nixon for doing so. In fact, later, when they were uncovered, Nixon's actions in Chile became one of the several cases that contributed to the widespread sense of deception that has characterized his presidency after the Watergate scandal erupted. Nevertheless, even though Nixon (and Kissinger) acted out of overzealousness and arrogance, their ideological convictions were not essentially different from those held by U.S. public opinion and its most important representative, the press. Over the nine-year period assessed by this essay, there was a considerable degree of correlation between U.S. government policies and American public opinion attitudes toward Chile.

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Notes

¹Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1987, pp. 13-14.

²I am following Clifford Geertz's definition of ideologies as "maps of problematic social reality and matrices for the creation of collective conscience". Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System," in Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York, Basic Books, 1973, p. 220.

³On the relation between ideology and U.S. foreign policy, see William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, Cleveland, World Pub. Co., 1959; Hunt, op. cit.; Tony Smith, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth-Century*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994; Walter McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World since 1776*, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997; Michael Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation-Building" in the Kennedy Era*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

⁴See Walt W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1960.

⁵Latham, op. cit., passim.

⁶Frank Ninkovich, *Modernity and Power: A History of the Domino Theory in the Twentieth Century*, Chicago & London, The University of Chicago Press, 1994, pp. xii-xiii.

⁷Latham, op. cit., pp. 69-108.

⁸For the ideological nature of newsmaking and the importance of the press as creator of knowledge and attitudinal structures see Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*, New York, The Free Press, 1978; Teun Van Dijk, *News as Discourse*, Hillsdale, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1988, especially pp. 11 and 182. For the ideological roots of the selection of foreign news, see Teun Van Dijk, *News Analysis: Case Studies of International and National News in the Press*, Hillsdale, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1988, pp. 39-40.

⁹"Daily Newspaper Readership Trend: Total Adults," Newspaper Association of America, accessed 28 May 2012,

<www.naa.org/Trends-and-Numbers/Readership/Readership-Archives.aspx>

¹⁰John C. Merrill and Harold A. Fisher, *The World's Great Dailies: Profiles of Fifty Newspapers*, New York, Hastings House, Publishers, 1980.

¹¹Carol H. Weiss, "What America's Leaders Read," in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 38, Issue 1, Spring 1974, pp. 1-22.

¹²William A. Dorman and Mansour Farhang, *The U.S. Press and Iran: Foreign Policy and the Journalism of Deference* Berkeley, University of California Press, 1987, p. 19. See also John Foran, "Discursive Subversions: Time Magazine, the CIA Overthrow of Musaddiq, and the Installation of the Shah," in Christian G. Appy (ed.), *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945-1966*, Amherst, The University of Massachusetts Press, 2000.

¹³John Dumbrell, *The Making of U.S. Foreign Policy*, Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, 1997, p. 146.

¹⁴According to Henry Kissinger, National Security Adviser and, from 1973, Secretary of State in the Nixon administration, "Empires have no interest in operating within an international system; they aspire to be the international system. (...) That is how the United States has conducted its foreign policy in the Americas." Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1994, p. 21.

¹⁵On the differences between U.S. foreign policies toward South American countries, on the one hand, and Central American and Caribbean-basin countries, on the other, see Alan Knight, "U.S. Imperialism/Hegemony and Latin American Resistance," in *Empire and Dissent: The United States and Latin America*, Fred Rosen (ed.), Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2008, p. 32.

¹⁶The literature on U.S. policies and covert operations in Chile is extensive. See Joaquín Fernandois, *Chile y el Mundo 1970-1973. La Política Exterior del Gobierno de la Unidad Popular y el Sistema Internacional*, Santiago: Ediciones Universidad Católica de Chile, 1985; Paul E. Sigmund, *The United States and Democracy in Chile*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993; Peter Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File. A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*, New York, The New Press, 2003; Jonathan Haslam, *The Nixon Administration and the Death of Allende's Chile. A Case of Assisted Suicide*, London, Verso, 2005; Kristian Gustafson, *Hostile Intent, U.S. Covert Operations in Chile, 1964-1974*, Washington D.C., Potomac Books, Inc., 2007; Michael Grow, *U.S. Presidents and Latin American Interventions. Pursuing Regime Change in the Cold War*, Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2008; Lubna Qureshi, *Nixon, Kissinger, and Allende: U.S. Involvement in the 1973 Coup in Chile*, Lanham, Lexington Books, 2009; Tanya Harmer, *Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War*, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

¹⁷From Undersecretary of State for Inter-American Affairs U. Alexis Johnson to Ambassador in Santiago Edward Korry, 30 September 1970. In FOIA, Chile Declassification Project-NARA, accessed 20 June 2012, <<http://foia.state.gov/SearchColls/Search.asp>>

¹⁸U.S. Senate, Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities. *Covert Action in Chile 1963-1973*. 94th Congress, 1st Sess., 1975, p. 25.

¹⁹Idem.

²⁰From Henry Kissinger to Alexis Johnson, 22 October 1970. In FOIA, Chile Declassification Project-NARA.

²¹Memorandum From William G. Bowdler of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy), 10 November 1965. In *Foreign Relations of the United States 1964-1968*, Vol. XXIII, South and Central America; Mexico, (hereafter FRUS 1964-1968), p. 616.

²²From Embassy in Santiago to State Department, 1 September 1969. In FOIA, Chile Declassification Project-NARA.

²³Telegram From the Embassy in Chile to the Department of State, 22 April 1964. In FRUS 1964-1968, p. 560.

²⁴From Ambassador Korry for Under-Secretary Johnson, 16 September 1970. In FOIA, Chile Declassification Project-NARA.

²⁵Ironically, the very same day on which the Chicago Tribune published these words in its editorial page, Augusto Pinochet assumed the position of Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean army.

²⁶*Covert Action*, op. cit., p. 57.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 57-8.

²⁸Memorandum for the Record by Jessup, 11 September 1964. FRUS 1964-1968, p. 592.

²⁹On the Kennedy administration and reform in Latin America, see Stephen Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1999; Latham, op. cit.

³⁰An example of this attitude is the book written by journalist Leonard Gross in 1967, *The Last Best Hope: Eduardo Frei Montalva and Chilean Democracy*, New York, Random House, 1967.

³¹George Boswell, "Latin America in Contrast", *The Atlanta Constitution*, 22 April 1966.

³²Theodore Moran, *Multinational Corporations and the Politics of Dependence: Copper in Chile*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1974, pp. 119-152; Paul E. Sigmund, *Multinationals in Latin America: The Politics of Nationalization*, Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1980; Joaquín Fernandois, Jimena Bustos, and María José Schneuer, *Historia Política del Cobre, 1945-2008*, Santiago, Centro de Estudios Bicentenario, 2009, pp. 101-126.

³³*The New York Times*, 20 September 1965, 28 December 1965, 14 April 1966, 12 October 1966, 29 May 1969, 19 June 1969.

³⁴Directorate of Intelligence, Intelligence Memorandum, "Situation Following the Chilean Presidential Election", 7 September 1970, in FOIA, Chile Declassification Project-NSC.

³⁵Memorandum for the Record, Minutes of the 40 Committee, 9 September 1970, in FOIA, Chile Declassification Project-NSC.

³⁶Memorandum From Viron Vaky (NSC) to Henry Kissinger, 14 September 1970, in FOIA, Chile Declassification Project-NSC.

³⁷Richard Helms, Hand-Writing notes of the meeting with the President on Chile, 15 September 1970, in FOIA, Chile Declassification Project-NARA.

³⁸From National Security Advisor Kissinger to President Nixon, 5 November 1970, in Kornbluh, op. cit., p. 121-128. Emphasis in the original.

³⁹Covert Action, op. cit., p. 25.

⁴⁰National Security Decision Memorandum 93, 9 November 1970. In Kornbluh, op. cit., p. 129-131,

⁴¹Haslam, op. cit., p. 182.

⁴²The New York Times, 6 March 1973, 25 June 1973, 30 June 1973, 31 July 1973, 9 August 1973, 18 August 1973, 31 August 1973.

⁴³James Burnham, "Give Up?" National Review, 17 November 1970.

⁴⁴U.S. Senate. Congress. Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations. The International Telephone and Telegraph Company and Chile, 1970-1971. 93rd Cong., 1st Sess., June 21st, 1973.

⁴⁵Miami Herald, 28 March 1973.

⁴⁶For an argument that stresses the importance of Chilean events for world politics, see Robert Alexander, *The Tragedy of Chile*. Westport & London, Greenwood Press, 1978, especially pp. 444-448. Alexander, a professor of economics at Rutgers University, was a member of the Task Force on Latin America that recommended the design of a special policy toward the region (which would later be christened the Alliance for Progress) to President John F. Kennedy.

⁴⁷A good survey of the reactions of the U.S. and European press to the military coup in Ángela Vergara, "El Reportaje a Chile", in Claudio Rolle (coord.), 1973: *La Vida Cotidiana de un Año Crucial*, Santiago, Planeta, 2003, pp. 31-57.