

ANNIVERSARY OF TRAGIC COUP
IN CHILE AND THE ROLE OF THE
CIA**HON. GEORGE MILLER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 17, 1998

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, September 11 was the 25th anniversary of the military overthrow of the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende in Chile, a country which had a long and democratic history. The National Security Archives has just released on the Internet dramatic documents they obtained through the Freedom of Information Act and elsewhere clearly showing the United States' efforts to overthrow the Chilean government. U.S. officials had maintained that they had no organized effort to topple Allende's government.

In the end, the bloody 1973 coup that ushered in almost 20 years of brutal military dictatorship was the work of Gen. Augusto Pinochet and the Chilean Army under his command. They newly declassified documents, however, show extensive U.S. covert operations to try to prevent Allende from taking office in 1970, to encourage a military coup and to destabilize his government and the Chilean economy until the coup took place.

During the subsequent congressional investigation of U.S. covert activities in Chile, then CIA director Richard Helms told Congress that the CIA and other national security agencies of the United States had not attempted to destabilize or overthrow the Allende government. Helms was later convicted in federal court for lying to Congress and was fined \$2,000. The documents below clearly show that President Richard Nixon could not tolerate the presence of socialist President Allende, despite his having won office in a free and fair democratic election.

This is what New York Times reporter Tim Weiner wrote about the documents in an article this past Sunday. "They show how much the United States was committed to thwarting Mr. Allende even before he took office, and they illustrate a fact that was not well understood during the cold war: The CIA very rarely acted as a rogue elephant. When it plotted coups and shipped guns to murderous colonels, it did so on orders from the President."

One of the most important things about the documents, however, is what is missing from them. It is widely believed that the United States has additional key documents that would help resolve ongoing legal battles concerning responsibility for acts of terrorism that took place on behalf of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile and around the world, including the United States. U.S. officials, however, continue to refuse to declassify or share with prosecutors in other countries these key documents.

The United States, which has an avowed interest in the rule of law, the elimination of international terrorism, and the promotion of justice and democracy in Latin America and throughout the world, should make available documents that will reveal critical additional information concerning the perpetrators of crimes and human rights atrocities committed on behalf of Pinochet dictatorship.

Below is a New York Times summary of the documents on the National Security Archives

website (<http://www.seas.gwu.edu/nsarchive/>), as well as two newspaper columns from the Boston Globe and the Miami Herald about the significance of the anniversary of Chile's bloody coup and of these new documents.

I commend these materials to my colleagues' attention.

[From the New York Times, September 13, 1998]

ALL THE PRESIDENT HAD TO DO WAS ASK; THE
C.I.A. TOOK AIM AT ALLENDE

(By Tim Weiner)

From 1970 to 1973, the United States sought to overthrow the Government of Chile and its democratically elected President, Salvador Allende, whom it deemed a Marxist threat to American interests. Under orders from President Richard M. Nixon, the Central Intelligence Agency mounted a full-tilt covert operation to keep Dr. Allende from taking office and, when that failed, undertook subtler efforts to undermine him. Those efforts "never really ended," the C.I.A.'s director of operations at the time, Thomas Karamessines, later told Senate investigators.

Twenty-five years ago this week, on Sept. 11, 1973, the Chilean military seized power. The junta, under Gen. Augusto Pinochet, ruled until 1990. Its death squads murdered more than 3,000 people, and it jailed and tortured thousands more. Chile is still trying to come to terms with the damage done to its democratic institutions.

The declassified Government documents excerpted below were collected by the National Security Archive, a nonprofit research group in Washington that has sought to uncover secret records since 1985. They were posted on its website (www.seas.gwu.edu/nsarchive/) on Friday. They show how much the United States was committed to thwarting Mr. Allende even before he took office, and they illustrate a fact that was not well understood during the cold war: The C.I.A. very rarely acted as a rogue elephant. When it plotted coups and shipped guns to murderous colonels, it did so on orders from the President.

United States Ambassador Edward Korry, in a cable titled "No Hopes for Chile," advised Washington on Sept. 8, 1970:

Civility is the dominant characteristic of Chilean life . . . And civility is what makes almost certain the triumph of the very uncivil Allende. Neither the President nor the Armed Forces have the stomach for the violence they fear would be the consequence of intervention.

The Ambassador followed up on Sept. 11 with a new cable, "The Communists Take Over Chile."

There is a graveyard smell to Chile, the fumes of a democracy in decomposition. They stank in my nostrils in Czechoslovakia in 1948 and they are no less sickening today.

On Sept. 15, Richard M. Helms, Director of Central Intelligence, took handwritten notes at a White House meeting with President Richard M. Nixon, Attorney General John Mitchell, and the national security adviser, Henry M. Kissinger.

I in 10 chance perhaps, but save Chile.. worth spending . . . not concerned risks involved . . . no involvement of embassy . . . \$10,000,000 available, more if necessary . . . full-time job—best men we have . . . game plan . . . make the economy scream . . . 48 hours for plan of action.

On Sept. 16, William V. Broe, chief of the C.I.A.'s Western Hemisphere division, met with Mr. Helms and other senior C.I.A. officers.

The Director [of Central Intelligence] told the group that President Nixon had decided that an Allende regime in Chile was not ac-

ceptable to the United States. The President asked the Agency to prevent Allende from coming to power or to unseat him. The President authorized ten million dollars for this purpose, if needed. Further, the Agency is to carry out this mission without coordination with the Departments of State or Defense. . . . The Director said he had been asked by Dr. Henry Kissinger . . . to meet with him on Friday, 18 September, to give him the Agency's views on how this mission could be accomplished.

On Oct. 16, a cable went out from C.I.A. headquarters to Henry Heckscher, C.I.A. station chief in Santiago, Chile, who had doubts about the plots.

It is firm and continuing policy that Allende be overthrown by a coup. It would be much preferable to have this transpire prior to 24 October but efforts in this regard will continue vigorously beyond this date. We are to continue to generate maximum pressure toward this end utilizing every appropriate resource. It is imperative that these actions be implemented clandestinely and securely so that the United States Government and American hand be well hidden. . . . Please review all your present and possibly new activities to include propaganda, black operations, surfacing of intelligence or disinformation, personal contacts, or anything else your imagination can conjure which will permit you to press forward toward our [deleted] objective.

Plans were already in motion. Five days earlier, on Oct. 11, Mr. Broe sent this cable from C.I.A. headquarters to the Santiago station:

SUB-MACHINE GUNS AND AMMO BEING SENT BY REGULAR [deleted] COURIER LEAVING WASHINGTON 0700 HOURS 19 OCTOBER DUE ARRIVE SANTIAGO LATE EVENING 20 OCTOBER OR EARLY MORNING 21 OCTOBER.

The United States did not spur the Chilean military to act, but it was not for want of trying, as shown by an internal C.I.A. report, "Chilean Task Force Activities," dated Nov. 18.

On 15 September 1970, C.I.A. was directed to try to prevent Marxist Salvador Allende's ascent to the Chilean Presidency. . . . A military coup increasingly suggested itself as the only possible solution to the Allende problem. Anti-Allende currents did exist in the military and the Carabineros, but were immobilized by the tradition of military respect for the Constitution. . . . [The C.I.A.'s propaganda efforts included] special intelligence and "inside" briefings given to U.S. journalists. . . . Particularly noteworthy in this connection was the Time cover story which owed a great deal to written materials and briefings provided by C.I.A. . . . C.I.A. briefings in Washington [deleted] changed the basic thrust of the story in the final stages according to another Time correspondent. It provoked Allende to complain on 13 October, "We are suffering the most brutal and horrible pressure, both domestic and international," signaling out Time in particular as having "openly called" for an invasion of Chile.

Another report, "Postmortem on the Chilean Presidential Election," by Mr. Helms to Gen. Alexander Haig, Mr. Kissinger's military aide, weighted the stakes.

On 3 November 1970, Mr. Salvador Allende became the first democratically elected Marxist head of state in the history of Latin America—despite the opposition of the U.S. Government. As a result, U.S. prestige and interests in Latin America and, to some extent, elsewhere are being affected materially at a time when the U.S. can ill afford problems in an area that has traditionally been accepted as the U.S. "backyard."

From November 1970 until September 1973, when the military seized power, the C.I.A.

spent \$8 million undermining President Allende. When the coup came, the United States knew about the plans and encouraged them, but played no direct role. Three weeks later, a United States military intelligence officer reconstructed the day.

D-DAY 11 SEPTEMBER H-HOUR 0600

Chile's coup d'etat was close to perfect. Unfortunately, "close" only counts in horse-shoes and hand grenades. . . . Original plan called for President Allende to be held incommunicado in his home until the coup was a fait accompli. H-hour delay in Santiago permitted Allende to be alerted at 0730. Allende immediately dashed to the palace . . . [where] he had access to radio communications facilities which permitted him to personally implore "workers and students, come to the Moneda and defend our Government against the Armed Forces." The hour was 0830. . . . Military had all roads to Santiago blocked. Lid was on TIGHT inside city. Everyone on streets not wearing right color jersey stood an excellent chance of getting shot. Allende managed to personally broadcast two "MAYDAY" messages. The first, at 0830, sounded strong and confident as he summoned the workers and students. The second at 0945 sounded morose, almost as if he was preparing the eulogy for his dying government. It was his last broadcast as the Air Force soon located and rocketed his antennae. The hour was 1015. . . .

Allende was found alone and dead in his office off the inner courtyard. He had killed himself by placing a sub-machine gun under his chin and pulling the trigger. Messy, but efficient. The gun was lying near his body. A gold metal plate imbedded in the stock was inscribed "To my good friend Salvador Allende from Fidel Castro." Obviously Communist Cuba had sent one too many guns to Chile for their own good. The hour was 1345. . . .

Semper Fidelis
Patrick J. Ryan
Lieutenant Colonel, USMC

Postscript: After 17 years as Chile's dictator, General Pinochet relinquished power to a civilian government in 1990. But he remained commander in chief of the armed forces, stepping down from that post only last March. In a farewell ceremony, the old general praised the armed forces as "the savior of democracy" in Chile.

[From the Boston Globe, September 13, 1998]

CHILE'S 'DISAPPEARED' PAST

(By Peter Kornbluh)

[Peter Kornbluh is a senior analyst at the National Security Archive, a Washington, D.C., documentation center. Declassified US documents on Chile can be accessed on the archive's website: www.seas.gwu.edu/nsarchiv/.]

Twenty-five years ago Friday—on Sept. 11, 1973—the country that Chilean poet Pablo Neruda once described as "a long petal of sea, wine, and snow" was transformed from Latin America's foremost social democracy to the region's darkest dictatorship.

The military takeover of Chile led by General Augusto Pinochet, a name that has since become synonymous with gross violations of human rights, marked the beginning of a repressive 17-year regime. During that blighted time, Sept. 11 was designated a national holiday. No longer. Today, it is simply a day of reflection on the past for many Chileans whose lives were inalterably changed by the violent coup and its bloody aftermath.

But while many in both Washington and Santiago would like to forget those events,

Chile's is a history that demands to be remembered.

Having launched a covert effort to overthrow the democratically elected socialist government of Salvador Allende in 1970, and having welcomed the coup with aid and support in 1973, the United States is inextricably tied to these events in Chilean history.

It was, after all, President Nixon who in September 1970 ordered the CIA to "make the economy scream" in Chile, to "prevent Allende from coming to power or to unseat him." It was Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, as recently declassified CIA records show, who told the agency that "it is firm and continuing policy that Allende should be overthrown by a coup" and directed that the agency "should continue keeping the pressure on every Allende weak spot in sight—now . . . and into the future until such time as new marching orders are given." Allende was assassinated in the coup.

At the time of Pinochet's takeover, the United States made every effort to stabilize the new military junta's grip on power. Even as reports of mass arrests, summary executions—including of two US citizens—widespread torture, and disappearances flooded the media, the CIA initiated new clandestine operations designed, according to their own documents, to "assist the junta in gaining a more positive image, both at home and abroad." The Nixon White House, in the meantime, opened the floodgates of economic and military support to the new regime.

The Central Intelligence Agency's actions in Chile also has a significant impact in the United States. Once the CIA's covert involvement in the overthrow of democracy there became known, that revelation helped fuel the first wide-scale national evaluation, in the mid-1970s, of the morality and propriety of covert operations abroad.

Similarly, the case of Chile established human rights as part of the lexicon of US foreign policy. Public outrage over White House acceptance of Pinochet's atrocities became the catalyst for organizing a permanent human rights movement in the United States. With Chile as their battle cry, US human rights advocates forced the passage of pioneering legislation in Congress mandating sanctions on governments that abuse their citizens—sanctions that were applied first to the Pinochet regime.

"I hold the strong view that human rights are not appropriate for discussion in a foreign policy context," Kissinger told Chile's foreign minister in 1975. It is the height of irony that, as a result of US intervention in Chile, public pressure forced future policy makers to incorporate the moral precepts of US democracy at home into the US posture abroad.

Yet, despite its historical importance, the coup and its aftermath have been institutionally expunged from the national consciousness—in both Chile and the United States.

In Chile, observes Isabel Allende, niece of the late president, discussions of events 25 years ago are considered "in really bad taste." The threatening shadow of the still powerful Chilean armed forces, the weakness of civilian rule, and the affluence of free-market capitalism has produced a self-imposed sociopolitical oblivion to the past.

In the United States, the national scandal over the Nixon administration's effort to overthrow a democratically elected government is considered ancient history—even as the full story of the CIA's role in the coup,

and US knowledge of Pinochet's atrocities, remains buried in still classified US government archives.

In both countries, the powers-that-be would prefer that the skeletons remain locked in the national closet. . . .

In the United States, there are victims of Chile's human rights atrocities who also deserve answers. There is the family of Charles Horman, executed in Chile's national stadium 25 years ago today (about whom the movie "Missing" was made). There are the families of Ronni Moffitt and former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier, both killed by a car bomb planted by Chile's secret police in September 1976—the most notorious act of international terrorism ever in Washington, D.C.

In Chile, history is easier to hide; General Pinochet, who designated himself a "senator-for-life" before relinquishing power in 1990, told Chile's leading newspaper this month that he "had nothing to do" with any human rights violations that took place during his rule. In Chile, there is neither the documentation nor the power to challenge him.

In the United States, however, keeping the secrets of the past is far more difficult. Slowly but surely, documents—CIA reports, National Security Council options papers, State Department cables—are being declassified under the Freedom of Information Act.

Moreover, Spain has asked the Clinton administration to release numerous documents relating Pinochet's "crimes against humanity"—part of an international human rights lawsuit the Spanish courts have filed against military authorities in Chile and Argentina.

Since many of the thousands of the still-secret US documents on Chile are now, or soon will be, more than 25 years old, they fall under President Clinton's 1995 executive order on national security information mandating that records of that age and older be fully declassified.

The CIA and other national security agencies are resisting compliance with the order, but with public pressure it is possible that the hidden story of the US role in Chile, and detailed US intelligence documentation on human rights atrocities there, will eventually be released.

"You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free," reads the Gospel of John emblazoned in the foyer of CIA's headquarters. Indeed, the truth is a right of freedom that both Chilean and US citizens deserve.

[From the Miami Herald, Sept. 11, 1998]

U.S. CRIPPLED CHILE'S DEMOCRACY

(By Saul Landau)

[Saul Landau is the Hugh O. La Bounty Chair of Interdisciplinary Applied Knowledge at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and a fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C. He is the co-author of *Assassination on Embassy Row*, the story of the Letelier-Moffitt killings.]

Today is the 25th anniversary of the U.S.-supported coup in Chile. On Sept. 11, 1973, the Chilean military overthrew the elected government of Salvador Allende and established a dictatorship that ruled until 1990. The United States played a prominent role in these events.

The CIA began to instigate violence in Chile following the September 1970 election of Allende, who headed a socialist coalition.

"I don't see why we need to stand by and watch a country go communist because of the irresponsibility of its own people," National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger said at the time. In testimony before a Senate investigating committee in 1975, CIA Director Richard Helms told of how President Nixon gave him "the marshal's baton" to conduct covert activities designed to stop Allende from being inaugurated in November 1970.

Helms's covert staff tried to bribe Chile's Congress and its military to deny Allende the presidency. Failing on that front, the agency paid an extreme right-wing group to assassinate Gen. Rene Schneider, Chile's chief of staff. When even that murder didn't succeed in blocking Allende's inauguration, the CIA began to destabilize his government.

For three years CIA officials helped instigate strikes in strategic sectors of the economy, promoted violence, and initiated smear campaigns against Allende in the media. Washington applied a credit squeeze to make Chile's economy squirm.

This destabilization campaign had its desired effect. Social conflict grew to the point where the Chilean military commanders, with U.S. encouragement, decided to stage a coup. As tanks and aircraft bombarded the presidential palace on Sept. 11, 1973, U.S.

Navy vessels appeared off Chile's coast. U.S. intelligence vessels monitored activity at Chile's military bases to notify the coup makers, should a regiment loyal to the Allende government decide to fight.

Allende died in the assault, alongside dozens of his supporters. Cabinet ministers and other staff were arrested and thrown into a concentration camp. No charges were brought against them.

Chile's institutions were destroyed, including the Congress, the press, and trade unions. Troops burned books deemed subversive. The junta began a systematic terror campaign, arresting, torturing, and murdering thousands of "suspected subversives." A Chilean government agency estimates that the reign of terror between 1973 and 1990 resulted in the deaths of some 2,300 Chileans.

Pro-Allende Chileans took refuge abroad, but even there the long arm of strongman Augusto Pinochet's secret police managed to reach them. In September 1976 in Washington, D.C., Michael Townley, a U.S. national and a bomb expert employed by Chile's secret police, recruited five anti-Castro Cubans to help him carry out an assassination. The assassins placed a bomb under the car of Orlando Letelier, Allende's former defense minister. The bomb killed Letelier and Ronni

Moffitt. Both victims worked at the Institute for Policy Studies.

The FBI discovered that the Chilean dictatorship had organized a six-country alliance of secret-police agencies, which provided surveillance on each other's dissidents and helped assassinate the most troubling exiled opponents. FBI agents also learned that the CIA knew considerable detail about this "Condor Operation."

In the late 1980s the United States, embarrassed over Pinochet's "excesses," pushed for a referendum to end military rule. Pinochet was defeated, but he forced the civilian government to accept him as head of the army until he retired in March of this year. He then became "senator for life," a post that he had arranged for himself.

Fortunately, Chile has returned to democratic procedures. But 17 years of military rule have taken an immeasurable toll on its people.

How would we Americans feel if another government decided that our voters had exercised poor judgment and sent saboteurs to undo by force the results of our election?

This is what we did to Chile. We altered its destiny.