

~~Secret~~

# NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

## Prospects for Chile

APPROVED FOR RELEASE

DATE: SEP 1999

~~Secret~~

NIE 945175  
6 June 1975

Copy No 334

parliamentary government which made it unique among its Latin American neighbors, it was seen as a model for modernization and economic development in a representative democracy. The Allende years broadened interest in Chile. European Communist and Socialist parties followed closely the formation of Allende's coalition, its rise to power, and its struggle to socialize the country. Chile also became a hero of non-aligned countries. It was viewed as a "scourge" of multinational corporations, and a thorn in the side of the "yankee imperialists." Allende's formidable international constituency spanned the Communist, Western, and Third Worlds.

39. Allende's ouster and death and the repression that followed provided fertile ground for an international campaign designed to discredit the military government and embarrass the US. The USSR and Cuba continue to lead the propaganda initiative. International meetings convened to condemn the "crimes of the fascist junta" attract participants from a large number of countries. To many, Chile has replaced Vietnam as a "cause celebre." Revelations of CIA involvement in Chile have increased support for "solidarity" movements. Much exaggeration and misinformation about Chile have been disseminated by Soviet and Cuban media and by Chilean exiles. All this has helped make Chile something of an international pariah at a heavy cost to its international, political and economic interests. Western European hostility to the Chilean junta has complicated the problem of renegotiating Chile's foreign debt.

#### Human Rights

40. The military government also bears heavy responsibility for Chile's poor international image. Because of their initial preoccupation with internal security, Chile's leaders failed to appreciate the damage that mass arrests, summary executions, and the incarceration of leading officials of the Allende regime would inflict on their country's interests. More recently, there has been a growing awareness that with its large economic and military needs, Chile is paying a heavy price as a result of its poor international reputation.

41. A stable internal situation has enabled the government to relax its security controls and to deny credibly any capitulation to foreign pressure. The prospect now is for further progress on freedom for political prisoners. The return of guarantees of due process for individuals, however, will be a lengthy affair.

42. The prisoner release and exile program announced last year was slow to get off the ground, but has begun to accelerate in 1975. The prime beneficiaries thus far have been those detained but not formally charged. The program has been extended to include persons tried and convicted, mostly for violations of the arms control law. The total number of prisoners—currently about 3,800<sup>4</sup>—should shrink substantially this year, although some persons considered too dangerous even for release into exile may be detained indefinitely. Seventeen of the 39 prominent figures of the Allende regime originally imprisoned on Dawson Island remain in custody. Guidelines on the treatment of prisoners have been laid down and some punishments have been dealt out to violators. There are also new rules calling for prompt notification to the families of detainees and requiring that within five days of arrest prisoners be charged, released, or officially detained without charge under the state of siege.

43. This is not to say that the total eradication of abuses is likely soon. The authorities in Santiago remain sensitive to the need for maintaining tight control over possible threats from elements of the Chilean left, and the junta itself cannot fully police or control the actions of the security agencies. The military firmly believe that they foiled plans by extremists to massacre the officer corps and other

<sup>4</sup> As of mid-May, 2,329 persons had been tried and convicted—mostly by military tribunals for various offenses including arms control law violations and acts of violence—and were serving sentences; 779 persons were in preliminary judicial processing, and 703 detainees were being held without charge under the state of siege, for a total of 3,811 "political" prisoners. The numbers in each category are subject to constant change as some people are released, others detained, and still others convicted. Although there is some inconsistency in the government prisoner statistics, we believe these figures are roughly accurate.

We estimate the maximum number of persons in custody at any one time since September 1973 to be about 15,000.

opponents of Allende and that groups like the MIR would still do so if given the chance. In the final analysis, dissidents will continue to be handled in a manner commensurate with the threat they are thought to pose, and security considerations will take precedence over concern with Chile's international image.

44. The prisoner releases have helped somewhat to improve Chile's international standing and there is likely to be some further progress as memories of the military takeover fade and internal security measures are gradually relaxed. But Chile's leaders are probably overestimating how far this can take them. Because of Chile's poor image, the campaign by its critics will easily be sustained by the exploitation of occasional abuses. Moreover, the focus of international concern with Chile is shifting from prisoners to the restoration of due process and political rights, areas in which the junta is much less disposed to move in the near term. The junta expects continued criticism and harassment from Communist sources, but it will continue to be exasperated and frustrated over the failure of non-Communist opinion to be satisfied. Chilean feelings that their critics will never be satisfied could delay progress on civil rights.

#### Peru and Other Neighbors

45. Chile's chief foreign policy goals are to overcome its international isolation, gain respectability and acceptance, and secure moral and material support. Its principal foreign policy problem is its concern over the threat believed posed by *Peru*, with its rapidly improving military capabilities. This concern underlies much of what Chile is doing to improve its international position and its bilateral relations.

46. Chilean military men are convinced that their Peruvian counterparts plan to avenge Peru's defeat at the hands of Chile in the War of the Pacific (1879-1883).<sup>5</sup> They also believe that Cuba and

<sup>5</sup> An interagency memorandum estimates that hostilities between Peru and Chile are unlikely over the next year or two. For a full discussion, see: DCI/NIO 2694-74, *Peru and Chile: Reassessment of the Potential for Conflict*, December 16, 1974.

the Soviet Union, for reasons of their own, are goading Peru to do so. Chile does not expect Peru to be ready to translate its revanchist dreams into aggression until late this year. In the meantime, Chile will continue to reinforce its northern troop commands, make further defensive preparations in the border area, and desperately seek arms to defend itself from the threat posed by Peru's new Soviet tanks and other modern military equipment.

47. From the Chilean perspective, *Brazil* serves as a counterweight to neighboring Argentina, and as a source of support against Peru. Moreover, Brazil is an ideological ally on many issues, and something of a model of what a military government can achieve. Brazil did little to conceal its happiness over the end of Marxist rule in Chile, but it has not become the large source of military and economic aid that Chile had hoped for. Nonetheless, Brazilian sympathy and support are appreciated.

48. Chile continues efforts to woo landlocked *Bolivia* away from its traditional alignment with Peru by exploiting La Paz's obsession with regaining access to the sea. A 13-year break in diplomatic relations was ended after a meeting between Presidents Pinochet and Banzer in February. Chile appears to be considering plans to impart some form of international status to the northern port city of Arica. The purpose is to accommodate Bolivia and to give Bolivia and other countries, including Brazil, a stake in deterring Peruvian aggression. Peru will object strenuously to such a scheme since it involves territory that once belonged to Peru. Lima might threaten to block it by force, citing terms of the 1929 treaty between Peru and Chile. This treaty prohibits either side from ceding the border area territory dealt with in the treaty without the other's advance consent. The US was not a party to that treaty but did help arrange the agreement and never objected to inclusion of a provision that disputes over its interpretation, if not resolved by Peru and Chile, would be settled by the President of the United States. Because of this, the US could be drawn into the dispute.