

HISAR SCHOOL
JUNIOR MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2023

**A World in Harmony: Creating a Future of Mitigated Polarization
by Addressing Ongoing Crises**

United Nations Security Council

Issue of the 1973 Chilean Coup

Nusret Efe Üçer

Forum: UNSC

Issue: Chilean Coup

Student Officer: Nusret Efe Üçer - Deputy Chair

Introduction

The 1973 Chilean coup d'état was a defining moment in Chilean history, where the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende, the first democratically elected Marxist leader in South America, was overthrown by a military junta led by General Augusto Pinochet. Amidst the Cold War, when ideological differences played an integral role regarding a nation's stance, allies, and international policy, the Chilean coup represents contradicting views of its era and portrays the division within the international community. A war of influence between the socialist and liberal ideologies, the political instability in Chile had been an issue for some time, and had been evident in the election of Salvador Allende, in which a three party presidential race produced results without majority. The need for confirmation of Salvador Allende by the Chilean congress in a democratic environment is a clear depiction of Chilean political divisions and instability. This election, however, will not last a peaceful term and make way to the Chilean coup that stems from the aforementioned radical political division of Chile and international influence, especially that of the United States. The coup had significant ramifications, both in Chile and globally. The coup's impact is still being felt in Chile today, with debates surrounding its legacy and the human rights violations that took place under Pinochet's rule. This report provides an overview of the events that occurred during the year of the coup, as well as the major parties involved and their views.

Definition of Key Terms

Coup d'état: A sudden, often violent, overthrow of a government by a group of people, usually military.

Salvador Allende: The democratically elected President of Chile from 1970-1973. Allende was a socialist who sought to implement significant social reforms in Chile.

Augusto Pinochet: The military leader who led the coup against Allende and ruled Chile as a dictator from 1973-1990.

The Cold War: The open yet restricted rivalry that developed after World War II between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies.

General Overview

Prior to the Chilean presidential election of 1970, the political division in Chile was prominent and had effectively incited intracontinental tensions. Following a period of economic crisis, suffering from high inflation, unemployment, and social unrest, the previously established Leftist party Christian Democratic Party gained popularity, which was to nominate Salvador Allende in the 1970 presidential election. Allende's presidential campaign revolved around mainly socialist reforms, including the nationalization of industries, improved worker rights and working conditions, higher wages, and expanded social programs.

Also prior to the election, Allende's socialist stance had been a source of discontent in the United States as the Red Scare took over public and state opinion, especially following the socialist revolution of Fidel Castro. National policies of the US motivated the White House to actively act against the election of Allende and prevent the spread of socialism in the Americas. The US funded Eduardo Frei's presidential campaign in return, actively involving themselves in Chilean politics and laying infrastructure in case of the election of Salvador Allende.

In 1970, Salvador Allende, as the first democratically elected socialist leader of South America, was elected as the President of Chile. His election was due to such a slight majority that his recognition as the president of Chile was a topic of debate within the Chilean congress. Allende acted upon his promises, nationalizing industries, enacting social reforms, and overall recouring Chile on a rather socialist route. This sparked fears of communism among the Chilean elite and the United States, given the context of the Cold War. Upon his election, the funding of the US was withdrawn from the Chilean government, and Chile was left to experience yet another economic crisis.

In the absence of the financial aid of the US, Chile once again fell into economic and politic turmoil, despite ongoing socialist reforms. This sparked further political tensions and even induced a failed coup attempt against Allende in 1970, prior to that of 1973. General René Schneider, was murdered in this attempt, and as his successors failed to keep the military politically uninvolved and united, the Chilean regime was further destabilized. Paramilitaries and other radical groups were formed under the following leadership.

Allende's presidency was characterized by his attempts to nationalize key industries, such as copper mining, and to redistribute wealth to the poor. His nationalization of the copper industries of Chile were met with inter and intracontinental discontent, and encouraged foreign involvement in Chilean politics. Also, Allende's policies were met with opposition from powerful groups in Chile as well, including the military, the media, and the upper classes. The United States government, under President Richard Nixon, was also opposed to Allende's government and provided support to opposition groups in Chile.

In 1973, the Chilean military, with the indirect support of the United States government, staged a coup that overthrew Allende's government. The US's involvement in the coup is a topic of discussion as the role of the US is not quite apparent within the timeline of the coup. It's more

that the efforts of the US, such as anti-Allende propaganda, are said to have made way for the coup. Therefore, the involvement of the US in the coup is a rather indirect one, leaving US as somewhat of an inducer or an indirect funder of the coup. The coup led to the establishment of a military dictatorship that lasted until 1990. The events of 1973 and the subsequent dictatorship have had a profound impact on Chilean society, politics, and culture.

On September 11, 1973, the Chilean military, led by General Augusto Pinochet, launched a coup against Allende's government. The coup was swift and violent, and Allende, after the bombing of the Presidential Palace in Santiago, is said to have ended his life seeing as that the military infiltration. The military declared a state of emergency and established a military junta that consisted of Pinochet and other high-ranking military officers. In the following years, Pionchet would soon rise to be the President of Chile and seize total control of governance.

The military junta began a campaign of repression against anyone perceived to be a threat to the new government. Thousands of people were arrested, tortured, and killed by the military and their supporters. Many became political prisoners, some were unlawfully incarcerated, and some were even purged. Many more fled the country in fear of persecution. The military also implemented policies that favored the interests of the wealthy and marginalized the poor. Chile was thereby stripped of its democratic regime and the military junta's regime marked Chilean history with its brutality and reign of terror.

Major Parties Involved

Salvador Allende and his supporters: Salvador Allende was the President of Chile at the time of the coup. He was a socialist who had come to power through democratic elections in 1970. Allende and his supporters were committed to creating a socialist society in Chile and implementing policies that would benefit the working class and the poor.

The Chilean military: The Chilean military was led by General Augusto Pinochet, who played a central role in the coup. The military was opposed to Allende's socialist policies and believed that he posed a threat to national security.

The United States: The United States played a significant role in the coup, providing funding, training, and support to the Chilean military. The US government, under President Richard Nixon, saw Allende's government as a threat to American interests in the region and worked to destabilize his administration.

The Chilean right-wing opposition: The Chilean right-wing opposition, led by political parties such as the National Party and the Christian Democrats, was fiercely opposed to Allende's

socialist policies. They worked with the military and the United States to bring about the coup and install a right-wing government.

Left-wing political groups: Left-wing political groups, such as the Chilean Socialist Party and the Communist Party, were strong supporters of Allende and his government. They opposed the coup and fought against the military dictatorship that followed.

The Chilean people: The Chilean people were deeply divided over Allende's policies and his government. While many supported his socialist agenda, others were opposed to it and believed that he was taking the country in the wrong direction.

International human rights organizations: International human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, were critical of the human rights abuses committed by the military dictatorship that followed the coup. They documented cases of torture, disappearances, and extrajudicial killings.

International governments: International governments were divided in their response to the coup. Some, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, provided support to the military dictatorship that followed. Others, such as Sweden and Canada, spoke out against the human rights abuses committed by the dictatorship and provided refuge to Chilean exiles.

Timeline of Events

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| January 3, 1973 | The Chilean Chamber of Deputies elects Salvador Allende as President of Chile. |
| March 4, 1973 | Allende is inaugurated as President of Chile. |
| June 1973 | The U.S. Senate passes the Foreign Assistance Act, which includes a provision prohibiting U.S. aid to any country where the military has overthrown a democratically elected government. |

| | |
|---|---|
| August 1973 | The Chilean military begins to plan a coup against Allende's government. |
| September 11, 1973 (Committee Start Date) | The Chilean military stages a coup against Allende's government. Allende dies in the Presidential Palace. |
| September 12, 1973 | General Pinochet declares himself President of Chile. |
| September 13, 1973 | The military junta suspends the constitution and dissolves Congress. Political opposition is repressed. |
| September 16, 1973 | The military junta establishes a new government, the Junta of National Reconstruction, led by Pinochet. |

Treaties and Events

The Santiago Declaration: In 1971, the Nixon administration in the United States, along with the governments of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, signed the Santiago Declaration, which pledged to work together to combat communism in the region. This declaration directly opposed the regime of Allendes and fabricated justification for the support to Pinochet's regime after the coup by the United States.

The Rettig Report: Following the fall of the Pinochet regime in 1990, the Chilean government commissioned the Rettig Report upon the concerns regarding the unlawful and inhumane regime of Pinochet, which investigated human rights abuses committed by the regime. The longlasting dictatorship was characterized by its brutality and exploitation of law, thereby demanded immediate investigation. The report identified over 3,000 cases of torture, murder, and disappearance, and it played a significant role in holding the regime accountable for its crimes.

The Organization of American States (OAS) met in October 1973 to discuss the situation in Chile. The OAS passed a resolution calling for the immediate restoration of democracy in Chile and condemning the use of force to overthrow a democratically-elected government.

Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture (Valech Commission): The commission was tasked with investigating cases of political imprisonment and torture that were not included in the Rettig report. The Valech Commission identified over 38,000 victims of political imprisonment and torture and recommended compensation for them. This commission further exemplifies the brutality of the situation and provides further insight to the Pinochet regime's harsh dictatorship.

The United Nations General Assembly also met to discuss the situation in Chile. The General Assembly mentioned the issues of the Chilean coup in multiple documents such as the **General Assembly Resolution 33/173, 33/174 and 34/176**. Documents of addression such as but not limited to these are representative of international criticism and the ineffectiveness of the criticism, for the junta continued its reign for another decade following these publications.

The US government under President Richard Nixon played a controversial role in the coup. Declassified documents have revealed that the CIA provided covert support to anti-Allende groups in Chile in the years leading up to the coup. After the coup, the Nixon administration provided economic and military assistance to the Pinochet regime, despite widespread human rights abuses.

The Pinochet regime also formed alliances with other right-wing dictatorships in Latin America, including Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. The military governments in these countries worked together to suppress left-wing opposition and dissent.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

One of the earliest attempts to resolve the conflict was made by the Chilean Congress, which was still functioning under the new military government. In September 1973, the Congress passed a decree calling for the formation of a National Council of Reconstruction, which was tasked with drafting a new constitution and organizing new elections. However, the military government largely ignored the Council's recommendations, and in June 1974, Pinochet dissolved the Congress altogether.

Another attempt to resolve the conflict was made by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which was part of the Organization of American States (OAS). In November 1973, the

Commission sent a delegation to Chile to investigate reports of human rights abuses by the military government. However, the delegation was largely stonewalled by the government, and its report was largely ignored by the international community.

Possible Solutions

Economic Sanctions: Economic sanctions could be imposed on Chile to pressure the military regime to restore democracy and respect human rights. This could include cutting off trade, investment, and financial flows to Chile, which would have a significant impact on its economy. While economic sanctions are controversial, they have been effective in some cases in promoting political change, such as in South Africa during apartheid. However, they could also have unintended consequences, such as harming the civilian population and strengthening the military regime's hold on power. It's important to note that even the withdrawal of funding from the Chilean government following the election of Allende induced yet another economic crisis and plunged the country into further economic and political instability.

International Mediation: International mediation could be used to facilitate negotiations between the military regime and opposition groups. A neutral third party, such as the United Nations or a group of countries, could act as a mediator to help the parties reach a peaceful resolution to the conflict. International mediation has been successful in resolving conflicts in other parts of the world, such as Northern Ireland and the Balkans. However, it would require the military regime's willingness to negotiate and could be viewed as interference in Chile's internal affairs.

Exile of Political Prisoners: This solution involves releasing political prisoners from detention and allowing them to leave the country. The military regime could be pressured to release political prisoners and allow them to leave Chile in exchange for lifting economic sanctions or other incentives. This would provide relief for the prisoners and their families and help reduce tensions between the regime and opposition groups. However, it would also involve abandoning those who choose to remain in Chile and continue to fight for democracy.

International Criminal Court: The International Criminal Court (ICC) could investigate and prosecute those responsible for human rights violations and abuses during the coup and the subsequent regime. The ICC is a permanent tribunal established to prosecute individuals for war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity. This solution would provide a mechanism for justice and accountability, and also serve as a deterrent to future human rights violations. However, it would require the cooperation of the Chilean government, which might not be willing to cooperate with an international court.

Bibliography

- Arriagada, Genaro. Pinochet: The Politics of Power. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1993.
- Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Cold War". Encyclopedia Britannica, 1 Mar. 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Cold-War>. Accessed 14 March 2023.
- Collier, Simon, and William F. Sater. A History of Chile, 1808-2002. 2nd ed. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Drake, Paul. The Struggle for Democracy in Chile. London: Macmillan Press, 1989.
- Evans, Peter. Dependent Development: The Alliance of Multinational, State, and Local Capital in Brazil. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979.
- Falcoff, Mark. Modern Chile, 1970-1989: A Critical History. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008.
- Feitlowitz, Marguerite. A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Fuentes, Claudio. The Other Sept. 11: Chile, 1973. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011.
- Goldberg, Peter A. "The Politics of the Allende Overthrow in Chile." *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 90, no. 1, 1975, pp. 93–116. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2148700>. Accessed 14 Mar. 2023.
- Kay, Cristobal. "Chile: The Making of a Coup d'Etat." *Science & Society*, vol. 39, no. 1, 1975, pp. 3–25. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40401828>. Accessed 14 Mar. 2023.
- Petras, James, and Betty Petras. "THE CHILEAN COUP." *Instant Research on Peace and Violence*, vol. 3, no. 4, 1973, pp. 163–76. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40724705>. Accessed 14 Mar. 2023.
- Onion, Amanda, et al. "Chilean President Salvador Allende Dies in Coup - History." *History*, 9 Sept. 2020, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/allende-dies-in-coup>.

