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OPINION

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Translated by Tim Ennis

**PAWN OR PLAYER? CHILE IN THE COLD WAR**  
(1962-1973)

**Joaquín Fernandois**

In this article Joaquín Fernandois argues that the papers presented in this edition of *Estudios Públicos* —the lecture and interview offered by Ambassador Edward M. Korry, the work of the historians Olga Uliánova and Eugenia Fediakova, together with ancillary documents— have to be understood in the context of the ideological tensions of the 20th century, to which Chile was both witness and party. This country has been extraordinarily sensitive to world political developments, and its political life has reflected the evolution of world events. According to Fernandois, this explains how in the polarization of the 1960s and early 70s, both the North Americans and the Soviets redoubled their efforts to promote policies in Chile in line with the way they saw their own interests. But the Chilean players were not mere pawns: they were convinced that their own interests were at stake in such terms as “socialism”, “liberty”, “free world”, “anti-imperialism”. Ambassador Korry was witness to this interrelationship, starting with the Kennedy Administration’s courting of the possibility of a “reformist” government in the 1960s, and passing through the vague and sterile

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financing of an anti-communist campaign in 1970, to his own recommendation to support forces opposing the *Unidad Popular* government. On the other side, the Soviets were financing the Communist Party and viewed *Unidad Popular* with great sympathy. In turn, they offered tempting loans to the Chilean army with the idea of “peruvianizing it” in the medium term, but they were not willing to help the “Chilean experience” with a subsidy like that provided to Cuba. Despite this, their Latin American admirers saw Moscow as the governing paradigm of Chilean politics.

The impressive testimony that *Estudios Públicos* presents in this edition —Ambassador Edward M. Korry’s revelations and the research by the historians Olga Uliánova and Eugenia Fediakova— does not stem from a wish to fabricate an “event”. It is a question of making it possible to view modern Chilean history as part of a greater whole, to which the Chilean people have adhered largely of their own initiative. Both the North American source and the Soviet one tell of a society that irritates and fascinates them, a society that they are not sure of understanding completely nor of being able to direct its daily life in a significant way. On the other hand, in Chile we believe we have an idea about “what happened”; or else we want to forget those years so as to consolidate the present. Whatever the case may be, this history is with us and continues to form us, albeit in the very different circumstances at this century’s end.

### Chile and the world

Whenever one looks at the relations Chile has had with the “world” and world politics, one thinks of links in the form of telephone lines, like cables that communicate our country with “other countries”, be they our neighbors or the big powers. In fact, and not without reason, if one asks the educated public what our international counterpart is, people think of the big players as the subjects on the international stage. Having said that, according to this idea, Chile appears as an island with communicational links to the world which relates to it through a series of stimuli that come and go. More than a few countries in the world must have this image of themselves. In this image, diplomacy, strategy, and at times trade relations, emerge as ways of embodying those communications.

At times, this perception is complemented or overwhelmed by another: namely, that this country is perhaps nothing more than a reflection of global forces, and primarily those of the big powers. “Imperialism”, of whatever flavor, is the true international player. And here one is not only thinking of state forces. In other words, not only did the government of the day have to bend to external dictates, but also various forces in the country—certain political parties, the oligarchy, or the Communist Party—responded to interests that were essentially foreign. The sense of independence was, therefore, a matter of breaking the links. Often national policy was legitimized by recurring to these images. In other words, throughout this century, both left and right—and their correlate, the center—have fallen back on the facile image of anti-imperialism to promote their point of view.

What has seldom been reflected on is that, at least since our emancipation and more strongly this last century, countries like ours have been part of a global society that is growing endlessly, although the frontiers between societies never get erased nor probably ever will be. This occurs because Chile belongs to a international system, an interrelated set of actors whose interests and gravitation cannot be ignored without putting the country in great danger. Even today, after the Cold War, we are living inside a chain of forces known as a “system of States”. Throughout the century, this has been even more true. The situation is a dead-end street, but the different leaders have clearly had limited options.

Our integration into the world occurs not only through inter-State relations, but also in another more subtle, but no less real way. We have built an image of ourselves based on a society where political will, the will of the State as a public space, has been a basic ingredient of collective life and the inspiration of individuals and groups. This creates a field of forces which is not easily manipulated according to the desires of the big players, should they wish to become puppet masters. But the forces and people that have been leaders were also formed in the vortex of world politics, i.e. their perceptions of “what needs to be done” were formed in the sources of modern culture. We were founded by the part of Europe that did not invent modernity, but, like the Iberian Peninsula in the 18th and 19th centuries, we too look towards modern Europe and—since the Second World War—the United States as the societies that ought to serve as inspiration in forging our own identity. In the post-Cold War scenario things are not very different. Moreover, although it is Western civilization that illuminates the modern world, in many of its features there are techniques and modes of organization that are perfectly transferable to other cultures. This has happened apparently unceasingly up to the present time.

Only someone who yearns for a world that is self-referential, isolated and of course unknown, could see this is a source of alienation. More than a few times in the history of modernity has there been a desire to escape from this vortex. Furthermore, in modern politics this position in the face of what is unavoidable or promising in modernity has been an essential point of escape. Naturally Chile cannot pretend to be a space that is untouched by this reality. The Napoleonic wars and the language employed at that time were the most remote causes of the hasty formation of the Spanish-American states, including our country. This has left its mark to the present day.

Furthermore, as Arturo Fontaine states in the prologue to these documents presented by *Estudios Públicos*, Chilean politics and its vortex of ideas has had a more universal or more global character than that of other Latin American countries, especially more so than the big ones: Mexico, Brazil, Argentina. Firstly, in the 20th century Chilean politics has maintained a surprising analogy, at least formally, with the development of European political culture. Secondly, over the last thirty years the great figures of politics and State in Chile have become images of continental and even world dimensions, either as a model, or as utopia or anti-utopia. This began somewhat timidly with Eduardo Frei Montalva; then it was catapulted into stardom with Salvador Allende, and has had its *bête noire* in Augusto Pinochet. Still, in the 1990s, somewhat conventionally, Chile evokes the idea of “model”. These figures make Chile known and understandable in the world, or at least intelligible to the categories of the receptor society.

Apart from the great figures, the different persuasions that have developed in the country have been directly influenced and even molded by ideas and ideologies of global scope. In a way, and exaggerating somewhat, in Chile the communism-anticommunism dichotomy —a great polarity of this century— predates communism. It has existed potentially as marxism-antimarxism, since the “meat strike” of 1905. Luis Emilio Recabarren founded the predecessor of communism, the Socialist Workers Party, in 1912. And in the 1920 elections the possibility could already be discerned that the Bolshevik (or “maximalist”, as it was called at that time) revolution would repeat itself on the South Pacific Coast. In the 1930s, the Chilean political cast, from left to right, replicated European political tendencies with near total precision.

From the 1940s to the 1980s, the country found itself in the eye of the hurricane of the Cold War. This was hardly due to Chile’s strategic importance. Copper has been important, but in the case of emergency the

Western powers were not going to get down on their knees if they could not buy it in Chile. The four thousand kilometers of coastline could not have much geopolitical value; far from the big theaters of operation, the international significance of the country was not to be found in its economic, territorial or military weight. On the other hand, the political image of the country did radiate strongly on this continent. With the spectacular election of Allende this reality multiplied and expanded, especially towards Western Europe and even the United States. In addition, although Chile's history does not enable us to state that it has had a democratic republican order as an immutable structure, from the "world ideological crisis" in the anteroom of the Second World War until the beginning of the 1970s, there was effectively a democratic political order in this country.

This was significant for Chileans as well as for others. For us it gave rise to a smiling arrogance as we looked down on our Trans-Andean neighbors and satirized their "arrangements", their interminable series of military coups and counter-coups, which, along with populism frustrated the development of the region's most modern society. "Chile is different" was the message our generation heard. In a way, this was an article of faith from the beginning of the 1940s. For the United States, ever since the war years it was important to keep "the only existing democracy" alive, as those responsible for Latin America repeatedly reported. Of course there were other general reasons relating to world struggle, that justified this North American action. This was the great confrontation of States and beliefs or ideologies which laid the basis for the Cold War. The destiny of Chile or Taiwan, or Somalia or Grenada, no matter how varied their histories and own conflicts, had a specific weight in the global struggle. The choice of a "socialist project" (i.e. Marxist) threw into relief the superiority of one system over another in the war of images. It was a powerful message for those areas of instability (i.e. most countries) where neither the "western model" (democratic and tending towards a market economy) nor the Marxist or totalitarian system had yet consolidated.

But in Chile there was no foreign occupation or civil war. It was Chilean political forces themselves that constituted the poles of attraction that ideologically emulated the grand framework of global confrontation. Political, as well as cultural Chile, developed its identity in almost instantaneous synchrony and analogy with the forces that were defining world politics. Moreover, the idea of representing a different position to the simple communism-anticommunism polarity was a response to this global development. Anti-Marxism, a sentiment that inundated part of political-

cultural Chile in a changeable way, shows the same types of argument as its counterpart virtually the world over. Likewise, since the 1930s a Marxist subculture had established itself in Chilean politics, which had enormous ramifications regionally as well as in professional and trade organizations and often families. The Communist Party (PC) is an extraordinary case of the creation of a disciplined group, largely motivated in its existence by a driving force that could be called political “milleniumism”, with its paradigm in the USSR. This was part of a universal sentiment, but with particular force in this country. Moreover, the PC managed to extract a remarkable capacity for sacrifice and self-denial from its members, unusual in Chile except among certain religious groups or orders.

### **Chilean forces and their changing relations with Washington**

There was no need to turn to the history of the United States as a great regional power to understand why many actors in Chile, if they felt threatened, would recur to Washington as a source of assistance. Besides, the North Americans had had a presence in Chilean politics dating back to before 1940, when the Second World War gave rise to what, with some exaggeration, Ambassador Korry calls “incestuous relations” between Chileans and North Americans. The importance of a community of perceptions becomes clearer if we remember that, in 1971, the Chilean business sector did not lift a finger or express any public regret about the expropriation of the Great Copper Mines (GMC).

The communists could not experience any sensation of doing something wrong by orienting their policy in line with Soviet inspiration, even against all reason and opportunity, such as when they supported the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The concept of “fatherland of the proletariat”, namely the USSR, a global image in communism in the 1930s, was still very much alive in Chilean communism until well into the 1970s. This fatherland was a state of nature re-encountered, where there was no contradiction between groups or between nations. Why should the “workers movement” in Chile not recognize that its interests were also there? Was it not entirely natural that all the efforts of “popular sectors” should be directed against imperialism?

It should be noted, by the way, that in our Chile, with its ever present forgetfulness—not unique on this planet—, all political forces have at one moment or another, shown alternatively pro- and anti-American

feelings. And this was hardly surprising, due to the powerful influence that the society that created modernity and the most powerful nation-state of this century has exerted over Latin America. It has been said that that the relation is one of love-hate, and this idea seems to be correct. At least, this is what happened in the Chilean case. The communists were pro-North American during the Second World War, and so encouraged intervention by Washington. The left were so again after 1973. The right, while basically coinciding with the economic and organizational *Weltanschauung*, on several occasions have emphasized a political “anti-imperialism”, but with a clearly discernible rationale: namely defending its way of life and its sentiments towards the modern world. North American political culture was almost as foreign to it as it was to the Marxist left.

The truth is that despite the political and economic inter-relationship, knowledge in Chile about the United States at that time was very scarce. The Chilean thinking class, in relation to North American political culture, was puffed up by its isolation in an insular country and its participation in Latin American solipsism; this was due to prejudices and ideological judgments. In this sense, the blows from 1973 on taught much to both Moors and Christians, although the backdrop of fascination for and rejection of the *American way of life* in its various aspects, is perhaps is going to be a permanent view.

So the idea that comes to mind, then, is that in view of this capacity of Washington to penetrate and bond with its partners, it would be better able to influence events in Chile. We believe, however, that the reality was exactly the reverse. The material we have in this number of *Estudios Públicos* is an additional argument for scepticism about the “agent” theory. It is true that the capacity for influence that a big power such as United States has is quite large, and it is greater when categories of civilization are relatively convergent, as in this case, although without those presumed “partners”. Similar institutions imply similar interests when facing a coalition of interests and antagonistic points of view. And the great powers, a historical constant, by their mere existence have a considerable measure of unilateral influence guaranteed to them. The big powers will not disappear in a globalized world; we see this every day on the world stage. But these Chilean “partners” are not puppets; they are part of the history of a small society, but one imbued with its own dynamic. They have their own motivations and they “distort” every message, “order” or stimulus emanating from Big Brother. The bigger partner also depends on the needs and perceptions of the smaller one. Except when the smaller partner directly threatens it, Washington has to maintain

coexistence with this region, including distant countries which are to some extent incomprehensible to it.

Having said that, in various circumstances United States has seen a need to intervene not only to influence Chile's foreign policy decisions, which would be natural, but it has also intervened as a player in domestic politics, which it saw part of its own interests. But here comes the interesting part. All political positions in Chile, at one time or other from the 1930s to the 1980s —of course they could not have been synchronized— encouraged and/or openly favored Washington's intervention. Since the mid-1970s we have had one part of this relation documented for the previous decade up to 1973; another part, from another source, is brought to light in this edition of *Estudios Públicos*. Less present in the Chilean public mind is the fact that this relationship has existed with the United States and probably also with the USSR ever since the Second World War.

The right and the center have had intermittent aid from Washington. This became clear in the material provided by the Church Commission Hearings. In those documents, allusion was made to *probable* financing by the USSR. But one also has to add the political will to include Washington as an indirect player on the domestic political stage. The communists, with their political strategy as from dawn on June 22nd 1941 (yes, such pedantry is necessary; at that moment titles and certain qualifications were changed), favored a North American presence at all costs, which could not be very far from the financing of "anti-fascist forces". After 1973, the policy of many forces on the left and center encouraged intervention by Washington against the military government. By the 1980s there were political channels, and something more *chic* like the National Endowment for Democracy was used. Needless to say, these forces used links with Cuba, the USSR and others to promote policies against the military government, although part of that left withdrew from this strategy in the 1980s.

Is this situation evidence of a country that has been "penetrated", satellitized, has surrendered of its own will? I do not think so in the slightest. As is insisted slightly later, the very documents presented here are eloquent proof of the North Americans' feeling of impotence at not being able to influence the development of this Southern land, despite its resources and the hopes placed in its policy. Chilean forces, the country itself, are part of world politics largely due to the sensitivity of our political culture to global events. To be precise, without the intellectual and political changes that occurred in the world in the 1970s and 1980s, one cannot explain the convergence that occurred at the end of the latter decade, nor



the unsurprising consensus of the 1990s, however fragile it may be, like all creatures of history.

All of this simply proves that Chilean forces identified their interests not only with the foreign policy strategies of certain great powers —is this at all strange in universal history?— but with the dynamic and political options of its own society. It proves that they were part of an international civil society that has been a powerful force for understanding between societies throughout the century, and which has increased quantitatively in the 1990s. It proves that the reality that may exist in words such as democracy, socialism, liberalization, communism, dictatorship, development was a reference to the language of our politics. That it may not have been healthy for our political system to have this coincidence expressed in a flow of resources, is perhaps something to think about. In any case, it was insane that during the so-called “State of Commitment” it was an article of faith that the international system, or some power, owed Chile a sort of subsidy. This created a market of illusions that seriously mortgaged Chilean politics. This be said of either “CIA money” or “Moscow gold”.

A superficial reading of the new documentation which *Estudios Públicos* is making public does nothing other than strengthen this impression. Again it is the “incestuous relationship” to which Ambassador Korry refers; I suspect that the same could be said of the Chilean Communist Party and the USSR.

The 1960s witnessed growing effervescence in Chile, and political polarization increased notably. Dissatisfaction with the “system” was clear, although one cannot ignore the strength of conservative or at least anti-revolutionary sentiment, represented, if you will, by the emblematic figures of Eduardo Frei Montalva and Jorge Alessandri. This created a field of forces which seemed fearful or exciting, but difficult to handle. In that decade Chile represented the hopes of contradictory forces. The Cuban Revolution provoked enormous activism from Washington, unusual since the days of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “Good Neighbors” policy; an activism that was embodied in the “young America” of John F. Kennedy. His inaugural address on January 20th 1961, in the language of the moment, epitomized the naive belief that the “American dream” could achieve “anything”.

In our continent this was expressed in the alliance for progress, which worked to modernize peoples that were still in the grip of retardative forces. Ambassador Korry shows very clearly how this was the mental map with which the men in the White House saw Chile in the 1960s. In his

scandal, the Ambassador perhaps forgets that a part of Chilean political forces, especially the Christian Democrats, had been educated by looking at North American reformism represented by Franklin D. Roosevelt; they were also bound to look at John F. Kennedy as a source of inspiration. In addition, until the middle of the 1960s, they had the ability to seduce the White House staff. Then there was a cooling off, as a result of a change in priorities in the Johnson years and the outlook of the new Nixon team. It is here that September 4th 1970 arrives as an bombshell. Washington adopts a public tone of dispensability, to discreetly support a semi-constitutional act or a *coup d'état* in to prevent Allende taking power. As from the following November 3rd, after the Schneider tragedy, the White House adopted the natural policy of progressively withdrawing aid to Chile; at the same time it would give financial support to the political opposition in Chile, which day by day was finding fewer sources of financing due to the progressive control over the economy exerted by the *Unidad Popular* government<sup>1</sup>.

### Chile's stardom and the iron years

But this whole situation, visualized in those years but not in any detail, hit the headlines with news of the report filed by the Church Commission in 1974 and 1975. This was part of the Watergate/post-Vietnam climate, which put the North American *establishment* in the dock and, with a certain hysteria, expressed its profound annoyance and deception with North American society. Together with the material that emerged from the ITT Hearings, this constituted a sensational case of revelations about the motivations and policies secretly adopted by Washington. Although part of their character could be foreseen any student of world politics, the details had a big effect, above all due to the widespread sympathy Allende aroused after his death. Washington was clearly on the defensive on this issue until the end of the 1970s, and even afterwards. Together with the *Pentagon Papers* (revelations about the origin of the intervention in Vietnam), the *Hearings* on Chile constituted an astonishing example of how a great power could publicly reveal its motives and policies, in the midst of tremendous feelings of guilt and accusations of a lack of morality on the part of the government. That this was so is another story; but there is no doubt at all that the "Chilean case" constituted a moment in the North American crisis.

<sup>1</sup> All this development is dealt with in my book "*Chile y el Mundo 1970-1973. La política exterior del gobierno de la Unidad Popular y el sistema internacional*" (1985).

This meant a new starring role for the Chilean case. Following the spectacularity of *Unidad Popular* Chile and the “anti-utopia” Chile of the military government, a passive role was now added, albeit one with some protagonism, which it played in the North American political crisis of the 1970s. This culminated in the mass media with the reference to Chile in the televised presidential debate of September 1976 between the challenger Jimmy Carter and incumbent President Gerald Ford. The democratic challenger reproaches Ford, blaming the situation in Chile on White House policies.

To assess the importance of the documents presented in this edition of *Estudios Públicos* limits need to be placed on this vast problem. As an outcome of these events there has been a fixation about interpretations of the fall of the *Unidad Popular*, i.e. the causes of September 11th. That “the CIA destabilized Allende”, as a final explanation, became an prior assumption in conversation about Chile. North American “harassment” seemed to be the main source of the crisis that led to Allende’s downfall. In the final analysis, the military acted in response to strings pulled from Washington. According to this interpretation, in the origin of these policies there were both irrational anti-communist obsessions that confused all social reform with communist influence, as well as economic interests that would be damaged by policies more in line with national interests, which were what the *Unidad Popular* had been promoting. The emotions this image provoked, can be seen in the film *Missing*, which in the 1980s captured the emotions of a large public and which plays on the idea of North American manipulation.

It is true that in Chile this interpretation of the facts is almost non-existent in the 1990s. But in the 1970s and 80s it accounted for a large part of the emotions with which the world viewed Chile<sup>2</sup>. That the CIA had led the conspiracy against Allende was not in dispute; that the 11th of September was set up by the North Americans also was not called into question; that the military government from 1975 began to have serious disagreements with Washington was something which was not taken into

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<sup>2</sup> Among the multitude of papers and articles, a sample might include the following: Germán Marín, *Una Historia fantástica y calculada: La CIA en el país de los chilenos* (1976); Seymour Hersh (well known publicist and *New York Times* reporter) *The Price of Power. Kissinger in the Nixon White House* (1983); James Petras and Morris Morley, *The United States and Chile. Imperialism and the Overthrow of the Allende Government* (1976). About “*Missing*”, there is the work by Thomas Hauser, *The Execution of Charles Horman* (1983). In the 1990s Joan Garcés, who exerted a still unstudied influence on Allende’s political action, returned with an interpretation in this style, *Soberanos e intervenidos. Chile la Guerra Fría y después* (1995). I have not had the chance to read an interpretation along these lines: Paul Jensen, *The Garrote: U.S. Policy towards Chile* (1988).

account in the explanation; neither was account taken of the fact that if it had been so easy for the United States to overthrow Allende why did it not obtain anything from the big amounts invested in the 1960s, nor prevent the Unidad Popular taking office after the elections?

These are the questions that another historiography has formulated, another “chilenology” which today, with a more analytical outlook yet fewer practical answers, tends to predominate. But of course, this topic does not have a starring role in public debate<sup>3</sup>. In Chile or in the United States, the 1960s and 70s are purely and simply “the past”. In our country everyone spreads a cloak of forgetfulness, even though occasionally they call it “memory”. Maybe the time has come to exercise this, along with an inquisitive look, though without providing hasty answers. As regards links with the United States, we have an event which is monumentally new. With the end of the Cold War, relations between the United States and Chile shifted to to a new category. The ideological element —what kind of society was desired and organized in this southern land— has ceased to be an urgent question for Washington. The Chileans, for their part, with the scars of the 70s and 80s, have abandoned —for now— the “subsidy” mentality which had been their custom throughout this century, and they have adapted to a changing world not only as regards politics.

It is in this context that Ambassador Edward Korry’s expressions appear so interesting; and so pathetically distant the minutes of conversations between Soviets and Chileans, although with a specific rationality.

### **Ambassador Korry’s contribution**

Ambassador Korry’s lecture and interview show a man with the stamp of his own personality. His style alone denotes a high level of education, able to deal with a complex political reality in sophisticated language. As he was not a career diplomat, he is allowed to have categorical opinions about men and situations, although more than a few of them seem somewhat arbitrary to us. At times he provides opinions on both right and left. The richness of his language is capable of transmitting atmospheres to us that official documents generally conceal. His career announced him as a special case.

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<sup>3</sup> My book, cited in Note 2, contains more data as well as other points of view. In the current decade the general appreciation made by Paul E. Sigmund in *The United States and Democracy in Chile* (1992), is interesting, although he does not stress the high degree of involvement of the Kennedy White House in Chile. Also in the context of US-Chilean relations, William F. Sater, *Chile and the United States: Empires in Conflict* (1990).

He was not a ordinary envoy. In this century, he can perhaps only be compared with the importance of Ambassador Claude Bowers (1939-1953). Although he did not have Bowers' access to the White House, he was way above being just another envoy to a country that was problematic but, in general, of scant importance to Washington. His curriculum was special: educated at an élite east coast university, a professional career in high level journalism with the intellectual capacity to understand the evolution of the ideas of the century. He witnessed the events of Eastern Europe's subjugation after 1945, including the particular case of Yugoslavia.

A Kennedy man, this would lead him into diplomatic paths. The testimony that appears here, one may speculate, originated in a relationship of enthusiasm which at some moment was broken. We do not know exactly when or why. But his allegations at the end of the 1970s which he expands on here with greater precision, reveal an old quarrel which began before his arrival in Chile in October 1967.

Before that, it was his experience in Ethiopia, which was very rich for him personally as well as for his country. He planned a policy for Africa which has been fully justified in the 1990s, now that "African socialism" has been thoroughly demystified. He gains the attention of Lyndon Johnson and Secretary of State Dean Rusk. More portentous for the tormentuous future, Richard Nixon visited him when many already considered him a political corpse. But the future president was to keep him in his mind's eye. Years later it was his turn to observe impotently how tragedy would hover over the Horn of Africa, and over his own policy of that time. In his lecture, and in the footnotes to it, Ambassador Korry draws a very apt parallel between the importance of Chile and Ethiopia in the world politics of the 1970s. In the African country, history was unfolding in reverse, as part of the Cold War, which was followed by a million deaths. In the 1970s it was *chic* to talk about the reactionary nature of the ousted emperor and of the need for change. This concealed a program of "Asiatic despotism" which hardly provoked any indignation among human rights activists. Africa continued paying for the "sin" of being Africa, as it has been doing for centuries.

This was the attitude he had towards Chile, although here the cards were reversed. The ambassador arrived in the South Pacific when this country was no longer one of Washington's priorities. In earlier years in Washington Chile had been chosen as "a model", in ironic contrast to the 1990s, when it has been Chile that has mainly presented itself as a model. At that time it appeared as the response to military revolution. The

documents presented here do not do justice to the fact that Washington sought and gamboled on several “models”. One of these was José Figueres’ Costa Rica. But this did not generate much enthusiasm in the hemisphere. The other card was the Venezuela of Rómulo Betancourt, who was very precarious politically. But there generally, for what one might expect from the Washington viewpoint, the story ended well; for the Venezuelans too in a way.

The third “model” was Chile. In the first place, in this context, something was surmised with Jorge Alessandri during the Eisenhower period; but both parties ended up deceived. There was greater scepticism later in the relationship between “Paleta” (Jorge Alessandri) and John F. Kennedy and his people. Here Ambassador Korry contributes new material on this topic. We already had the general idea, even regarding the Kennedy administration’s courting of Chile, or the enormous amounts of money spent on helping non-governmental organizations, such as the surprisingly large sums destined for the 1964 campaign. Korry provides details about the circle surrounding Kennedy that decided policy towards Latin America, especially the case of Ralph Dungan; the pertinent role of the North American Catholic Church also comes out clearly. As regards these years, Korry refers to the easy access Christian Democrat leaders had to the White House. This had begun earlier, but it was to multiply from 1960-1962 onwards<sup>4</sup>. One would also have to note the access to the social world that various Chileans, generally of the center-left, had in Washington, above all through ECLAC and another multilateral agencies. The ambassador states:

My single greatest surprise here was to discover that Chileans had far more influential access than I to the White House, to my government’s agencies, to large corporations, to the best placed lobbyists, to key politicians, academics and editors. (E. M. Korry, “The USA-in-Chile and Chile-in-USA”, *infra*.)

As a whole, it would politically cloud the links that Chile’s political or economic leaders had traditionally had, such as the owners of *El Mercurio*, for example. In all of this one sees a Chilean activism just as decided as that shown by the North Americans, although the weight of each was very different, of course.

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Robert Phillips, January 9th 1991, who was in charge of the Chilean Desk at the State Department between 1959 and 1961.

What Ambassador Korry shows us in his lecture is the degree of voluntarism that the North Americans had. They believed they were facing a new case of “Reconstruction”, i.e. the policy of “re-education” that arose following the confederate defeat in 1865. The same thing occurred as a result of the occupation of Germany and Japan after 1945. As I mentioned, John F. Kennedy and his world represented the ultimate naive *enchanted* notion, that a modernizing boost in support of the Chilean (or Venezuelan...) version of North American political culture would lead to a sustained process of modernization and democratization in the south. This was the political translation of the ideas of W. W. Rostow in his well known book *The stages of economic growth: a non-communist manifesto* (1960). According to Korry, for the Kennedy administration:

The goal of its truly international effort was to establish a dynasty so that Chile would be stable and dependable enough to make worthwhile an American economic and social investment of one and a quarter billion dollars —so that Chile would embody the progressive, political and social ideals of its US patrons. (E. M. Korry, “The USA-in-Chile and Chile-in-USA”, *infra*.)

Johnson warmly welcomed Frei’s victory in 1964, and aid continued to be provided generously. But by 1967 things had changed. In his account, Korry gives importance to personal issues, highlighting the rejection that the rhetorical nationalism of Gabriel Valdés had provoked in Washington. I am not sure this was the case, although later in 1969 Nixon did become irritated with Valdés. Maybe it was a matter of the exhaustion that Vietnam and other issues were exerting on the White House that led to a change in priorities. These North American courtships never last too long: ask the Chinese and the Kurds in our own time.

Now, what is clear is that the Korry who arrived in Chile, arrived with a predisposition against the policy of such close ties between Washington’s project, the Chilean government and the White House. Korry imposed his style in a way that for students of international relations is strange, showing such antipathy towards the Chilean chancellor that he didn’t even seek a meeting with him. Although he shows great appreciation towards Frei, as did practically all North Americans of that time and now, his testimony is interlaced with hostility towards many Christian Democrat leaders, and this seems to match his disappointment with the John F. Kennedy democrats. He provides valuable details about the “agreed nationalization” of copper in 1969, one of the culminating moments of his political action.

The ambassador did not much appreciate Alessandri's candidacy, and in his account he confirms that the North American government did not provide direct aid to Alessandri, nor to Tomic apparently, although North American interests in Chile did provide support for the former. In this he aptly corrects Kissinger, in the sense that the Alessandri candidacy was not lost because of a money problem. The ambassador also provides a sensational, although not *sensationalist*, document — the Contingency Plan, which Korry has called “Fidelism without Fidel”, where the character of the *Unidad Popular* is established as well as the dynamic it would follow if it won the 1970 elections:

This paper proceeds from an assumption that Salvador Allende will be the next President of Chile (...)

The political forces Allende will bring to power can be seen in combination as representing what may be described as *fidelismo* without Fidel. Essentially Popular Unity is the same kind of uneasy alliance between revolutionary nationalists and orthodox Communists that Castro has established in Cuba. There are two major differences: Allende, by nature a transactional politician, is no Fidel; and the PCCh, the dominant partner in Allende's coalition, has an incomparably stronger political hand to plan than the PSP ever held in its dealings with Castro. Despite these factors, we believe the analogy is useful in plotting the course of a Popular Unity Government may be expected to take. With the same basic forces and the same ideological commitments at work, we foresee a repetition of the Cuban experience, at least in programmatic terms if not in the element of revolutionary style (E. M. Korry, “Contingency Report, August 1970”, in “Chile in the Archives of the USA”, *supra*).

In addition, according to his recollections, the ambassador predicted victory by Allende. So he recommended the policy Washington ought to pursue, which is what the Nixon administration did in fact pursue after its flirtation with Track I and Track II! These —Track I and Track II— were attempts to provoke through constitutional but abusive means, a new election in which Frei would be able to present himself as candidate (I), and a military coup which “would call new elections” (II).

Referring to the situation in October 1970, Ambassador Korry states:

Moreover, the Chilean armed forces were overwhelmingly committed to non-intervention in the political process —the point I had emphatically made beforehand to Kissinger that morning as well as in repeated cables. Any effort to change their point of view



would blow up in the face of the United States with enormous damage to US interests and to the President personally, I said (E. M. Korry, “The USA-in-Chile and Chile-in-USA”, *infra.*).

What Track I and Track II might have been able to achieve is a matter for conjecture. There are two interesting things here. Firstly, any plan came up against the fact that the Chilean leaders, beginning with Frei, no matter how crushed they felt, did not wish to take any initiative. Secondly, the ambassador himself opposed all North American intervention, but Nixon and Kissinger overruled him and made arrangements directly with Henry Hecksher, the CIA chief in Santiago. It is difficult to believe that the ambassador did not realize what a CIA chief would have to do under a president like Nixon who felt the results of the elections as a snub. Furthermore, many Chileans, even in the government, were asking for a “signal” from the embassy.

But there is some logic in the relation between the Contingency Report and the policy followed by the White House from November 1970 onwards. The *Unidad Popular* would try, as in fact it did try, to build a “socialist” system, and, as part of its political struggle, it withdrew financial oxygen from the print media and opposition parties. To impede this nearly US\$ 7 million was spent, channeled through the CIA. At that time, in an economy like Chile’s, with extremely high inflation as was the case during the *Unidad Popular*, with a black market and certain other variables, deflating the dollar (to estimate its real value at that time) does not express its full potential and does not serve to comprehend the significance of these funds. The same is true, although to a lesser extent, in relation to earlier years, as well as Soviet support to the Communist Party.

The policy that the Contingency Report recommended for the United States consisted of maintaining minimum relations with Chile and letting Chile decide the type or relations it wanted. Afterwards, the North American response would come. It seems to me that, while the United States was not involved in planning the 11th of September, which had a domestic rationale that was all too obvious, the North Americans sent a “message” to Chilean officers that they would support them in government if they overthrew Allende.

There is another aspect that is dealt with in greater detail in Ambassador Korry’s testimony, namely the offer of negotiation the ambassador makes to Allende in the context of copper nationalization. There were allusions to this in the *Hearings*, but it appears here in detail. In principle, Allende was not against reaching an agreement with the North

American companies, as in practice a very low price would be paid, but he came up against the dogma that “imperialism was to blame” and, consequently clashed with the left wing of the *Unidad Popular* headed by Altamirano who opposed an agreement. This is consistent with the policy of supporting opposition forces, as the White House did not want to center its policy towards Santiago on an issue of “nationalization”. In the atmosphere of the 1970s it was Allende who received applause on this point. Nixon had to pay attention only because powerful corporations exerted pressure in Washington. In this sense, the Nixon-Kissinger policy had strategic-ideological motivations. It did not originate in a simple defense of “capitalist interests”, although these could not be ignored. Hence Korry’s mediation was welcome, and many Chileans close to Allende also supported it.

The documentation that accompanies the lecture by Edward M. Korry —footnotes and appendices— abounds in a multitude of facets that are important for understanding the Chile of that time, such as the Soviet attempts to gain military influence. It seems to me that the ambassador exaggerates when he argues that the communists, when they saw the government was failing or had failed by the beginning of 1973, began to feel comfortable with the overthrow of Allende: according to Korry this would be the opportunity for the communists to get rid of their rivals on the left. It is true that this had happened elsewhere, but is highly unlikely that everything would have been planned so rationally.

Korry’s contribution is the final word in a campaign that the ambassador carried out in his time. Firstly he took refuge in what he considered a public duty. Then he felt he was abandoned by Nixon and his people, made a scapegoat by *The New York Times* and used by the Church Commission. When he wished to explain the context of his actions, Korry was now satanized by North American politics and the press. The Church Commission Hearings, led by the Democrats, had wanted to conceal the fact that the origin of the North American intervention was Kennedy’s policy, especially that of Robert Kennedy, of supporting Frei. Church’s aim was to protect Kennedy and Frei; protecting Frei was also the intention of the Nixon and Ford White House, because in the mid-1970s they still saw him as the best alternative in Chile. In this regard Ambassador Korry states:

To think, as others do, that I was punished by a form of excommunication by Washington because of my views on Allende or Chile is equally erroneous. The unforgivable crime I had

committed was not taking political sides in Washington, not wishing to heed the first call from Senator Church's staff in 1973 — "to help us to get Kissinger and Nixon" or well get you. As one utterly convinced from early 1971 to mid-1974 that I had prevented any adventure, as one who had heard very persuasive proof in 1971 that I had indeed saved the US and Nixon from a disaster, why would I act against those who had heeded my warnings, my judgment? (E. M. Korry, "The USA-in-Chile and Chile-in-USA", *infra*.)

One may dissent from these interpretations, powerfully suggested or confirmed by Ambassador Korry's testimony. On the other hand, what they do show is that the "incestuous relation" as Korry calls it — it would be preferable refer to it as the interrelation between Chileans and North Americans (or Soviets)—, was part of an internal dynamic of Chilean political society. From the North American point of view, the importance of Chile lay in the "demonstration value" its political system had for the region and even for Western Europe. All of this may cause displeasure, but it reflects the real kind of importance of Chile has had in the inter-American system. Even at the end of the 1990s, "Chile as model", in a very different context, still has something of this value.

With things seen in this way, the surprising thing, and what these documents and testimony confirm and magnify, is the North Americans' frustration and incapacity to influence events in Chile unless it acts jointly with actors who read their interests in a way that converges with the North Americans'. It is not unlikely that in the era of world ideological crisis many of these situations would have occurred. As part of the development of its own identity, it is the way in which a country that is sensitive to world events, imitates or appropriates for itself, copies or learns, the development of a world history with which it has been umbilically linked since its origins.

### **The Soviet Union, the Communist Party and Unidad Popular**

Those of us who have studied these years and these issues have always longed for the chance to compare the relatively rich information produced by North American society, against what must have been stored away in Soviet archives. There was a clear disequilibrium of information. A lot was said about the CIA, but the KGB was more in the shadows. Many of us who studied these problems looked forward to the day when these sources would be accessible. "When would it be?" we asked ourselves,

certain that it would be on the day we died. However, the former Soviets themselves suddenly began, enthusiastically and also somewhat anarchically, to open the sources of their material in a mad rush. This enthusiasm has cooled in the second half of the decade, but in any case it has allowed us to confirm or alter many hypotheses.

In the Chilean case, the material presented in this edition of *Estudios Públicos* in another era would have created a sensation like the Church Report caused in its time. Moreover, it would be prudent to say that there were also funds provided through channels other than the source investigated in the work of O. Uliánova and E. Fediakova (the International Fund). As the Russian historians argue in another part of this publication, this was a “normal”, and in a way legitimate, part of the fabric of world politics during the Cold War. But the Soviets had little influence over the course of events in Chile, and it is likely that their level of persuasion over the communists, as regard concrete policies, was not high. The issue was more the reverse. The local communists developed a high degree of faith in Moscow, and the fixation on the Soviet model and the orthodox Marxism acted as a heavy ballast in the national political game.

The Communists, although flexible and skillful in the domestic political game while in opposition, did not have a plausible strategy for a “transition to socialism” once in power. Moreover, they occasionally recognized the need to negotiate. In the midst of these contradictions, September 11th arrived. But what is interesting here are the parallels with the resources the United States sent to Chilean players. Like the “gringos”, the Soviets did not create domestic communism out of nothing. They supported it, that much is clear, and this helps to understand the powerful apparatus developed by the party throughout the country, and the humble, but decorous and minimal sustenance it afforded its militants. Of course, communism also obtained resources inside the country, and there was no unilateral dependence on Moscow. But the Soviets had to take care of those whose faith in them was still solid.

When it comes to understanding the motivations behind decisions, one cannot compare the quantity and quality of Soviet material available for analysis with the wealth offered by the *Hearings* and the North American documents presented in this edition. Why is this? Apart from the fact that there is still a lot of paper to shake the dust off, one could say that the USSR did not pursue the interventionist policy of the North Americans. The Soviet ambassador’s report of conversations with Luis Corvalán and Volodia Teitelboim for example, are like bureaucratic reports or notes for an investigation.

Although this “innocent” possibility is contradicted by the still fragmentary information on the financing of the Communist Party, there is another element. The internal Soviet documents—in various spheres, thousands of them have been opened already—used a conventional stylized, pedantic, extremely bureaucratic language. The writer had to use all the symbols and references of a scholastic language, hard to believe even, and make all the events and facts fit into an extremely careful ideological line. Even so, in the dialectical game this semantic system had its rationale and its strengths.

The reports we possess can be read in this de-ideologized way, and many of us might concur with their appreciation of certain aspects, at least regarding political developments during the *Unidad Popular*. One might conclude that, according to these documents, the Soviets were predictably supportive of the communists’ strategy, whom they saw as reliable friends, in the same way as the North Americans viewed various actors in those years, especially Frei. The difference is that here the *entente* is based on a common participation in an ideological paradigm of the 20th century. Here it is worth mentioning what a report from the Soviet embassy in Santiago said on October 13th 1970:

If on the eve of the elections the left-wing block pursued an autonomous strategy in its struggle for power, and did not in effect accept a broad political collaboration with the PDC, after the elections the transition stage demanded that this line be revised. The invitation formulated to the Christian Democrats to collaborate politically with the left-wing bloc came to be the central link in the struggle to guarantee the transfer of state power to the hands of the *Unidad Popular*. The decisive role of the Communist Party of Chile guaranteed the change in the strategic line of left-wing political parties (USSR Embassy report, October 13th 1970, in “Chile in the archives of the USSR”, *supra*).

The Russian historians explain the context of this material. Here it only remains to stress that they reflect the Soviet view of Chile. It was a view from a distance, not overly committed. The Soviets only showed real interest in providing resources to the Communist Party and in offering the army tempting loans with the idea of peruvianizing it in the medium term. Although happy to create a problem for the North Americans, they were not willing to risk a head-on clash with them, still less to enter into the obligation to subsidize the Chilean economy as they had done with Cuba. In the paragraph quoted below, the distinction is clearly made: Chile is a friendly “developing” country; it is not “socialist”, so there are no unconditional obligations:

Thus, the development plan for soviet-Chilean trade proposed by the Chilean side means that the Soviet Union would have to accept conditions such as had never been contemplated in USSR relations with developing countries. The Chileans expected the USSR to provide them annually with large amounts of basic goods that were scarce in the USSR, such as wheat, meat, butter, cotton, etc., on the basis of a long-term loan. In turn, it is assumed that the Soviet Union will have to import products for which it does not have great need, paying for them immediately in hard currency (...). (Report of the Latin American Institute, Academy of Sciences USSR, ca. July 1972, in "Chile in the archives of the USSR", *supra*).

In addition, the information gathered suggests a distrust of the wisdom of the concrete economic measures implemented by the *Unidad Popular*, although their strategy and ends were approved. In this sense, Allende was to swallow a bitter pill in Moscow in December 1972.

This brings us back to the beginning. Communism was a Chilean actor, as were those Chileans who sustained their political efforts on funds channeled through the CIA. Their elections were basically a product of Chilean history, to which a high degree of identification with global forces was and is inherent. Responsibility, through which all possible emancipation begins, always amounts to choosing the desired mode of social order along with its contradictions, shortcomings and hopes. Only then can one expect the world to be filtered in accordance with the country's possibilities.

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