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"Allende Wins"

Chile Marks 50th Anniversary of Salvador Allende's Election

Declassified Records Capture U.S. Reaction to First Free Election of a Socialist Leader

September 4, 1970, Historic Vote Prompted Nixon/Kissinger Regime Change Effort



Washington, D.C., September 4, 2020 – “Chile voted calmly to have a Marxist-Leninist state, the first nation in the world to make this choice freely and knowingly,” U.S. Ambassador Edward Korry dramatically reported to Washington in a cable titled “Allende Wins” on September 4, 1970. “[W]e have suffered a grievous defeat; the consequences will be domestic and international; the repercussions will have immediate impact in some lands and delayed effect in others.”

On the 50th anniversary of the history-changing election of Salvador Allende in Chile, the National Security Archive today posted a selection of previously declassified documents recording the reaction of U.S. officials to the first democratic election of a Socialist leader in Latin America, or elsewhere. Allende's victory set in motion a furious effort, ordered by President Nixon, supervised by his national security adviser, Henry Kissinger, and implemented by the CIA, to destabilize Chile and undermine Allende's ability to govern—an effort that set the stage for the military coup led by General Augusto Pinochet on September 11, 1973.

“These documents remind us that Allende's election was a turning point, not only in Chilean and Latin American history but in United States and world history,” noted Peter Kornbluh who directs the Archive's Chile Documentation Project. “A half century later, the Nixon administration's imperial response to Allende's democratic election continues to resonate.”

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