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Special Lecture Series—The Allende Regime in Chile: An Historical and Legal Analysis: Part III

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THE ALLENDE REGIME IN CHILE: AN HISTORICAL AND LEGAL ANALYSIS: PART III

by *Eugenio Velasco*

In early June, 1976, the Organization of American States met in Santiago, Chile. The main topic for that meeting was human rights in the Western Hemisphere. On the 8th and 9th of June, a thirteen page letter (dated June 6, 1976) was distributed to all of the ministers of foreign affairs attending the meeting. This letter was written and signed by five practicing Chilean lawyers. It set forth, openly and in great detail, the collective experience of the five lawyers with respect to extensive and systematic violations of human rights in Chile. One of the authors of this letter was Eugenio Velasco, Professor Emeritus of the University of Chile, member of the Chilean Academy of the Social Sciences, ex-Dean, ex-Director and ex-Professor of Law in the Law School of the University of Chile, and ex-Ambassador of Chile in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco; another author was Jaime Castillo, University of Chile Professor, ex-Minister of Justice and ex-representative of Chile before the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations.

On August 6, 1976, both Eugenio Velasco and Jaime Castillo were violently arrested and, without a hearing of any kind, were swiftly expelled from Chile by unidentified civilians working for the military government. The reason subsequently given by the government for the expulsion was that the presence of the two lawyers in Chile represented a "threat to national security."

Presently, Eugenio Velasco is Visiting Professor of Law, UCLA Law School.

I. WHY A PEACEFUL TRANSFER OF POWER WAS NOT POSSIBLE IN CHILE

A. The Program of the U.P. and the Election

In my first lecture I described some aspects of Chilean life and of the constitutional and legal situation as of the 3rd of November, 1970, when the National Congress elected Salvador Allende as President of the Republic. In the second lecture, I analyzed the principal constitutional and legal violations carried out by the Popular Unity government, which provoked its overthrow by a military coup on September 11, 1973. This put an end to the most solid and stable democracy of Latin America.

In the third and final lecture of this series, I shall examine the reasons that impelled Allende's government to act as it did; why the innumerable efforts to try to maintain the government within a constitutional framework failed; and why the publicized thesis of the unique experiment of turning a nation towards Marxist socialism through free elections in a legal way, failed, and in its failure destroyed Chile's history of democracy and freedom.

I will try to be objective, but obviously my interpretation cannot be neutral, because my personal view is inseparable from my own ideological formation. That is why I must start out by telling you that I have belonged, since I was a young man, to the Radical Party, although I dedicated my life to the university and only started acting in politics in 1972. The Radical Party has a social democratic tendency; in Chile, it seeks fundamental changes in the socio-economic structure of the country in order to establish a more just society in which poverty and ignorance were eradicated, in which the privileges of classes or groups would disappear, and in which everyone had equal access to a dignified life and to the development of their spiritual values in a framework of liberty and democracy. To reach these objectives, we think that the state must control and manage important economic activities that are vital for development through a "social area of economy." We also believe that a "private area" must exist to allow the development of intelligence and individual abilities and to make possible political freedom. However, this freedom must be maintained within, and supervised by, the general plans of the state to avoid exploitation and to benefit the interests of the society. We think it improper for capital to exploit the proletariat by simply buying its labor and that, for the same reasons, the workers must have participation in the administration and profits of the companies where they work in order to gradually create "workers' companies" within the private area. By "workers" we mean the blue-collar workers and employees, professionals, technicians and managers. In other words, we think that labor must predominate over capital and that work may utilize, in its benefit, the necessary capital by paying a fair interest. All this is to occur within a system which strictly respects freedom in all its aspects, the existence of political parties, free and secret elections, and the periodic replacement of the authorities by the people.

I want to remind you that in 1970 Chile was the most politically advanced country in Latin America. It had a high rate of literacy and school attendance and a wide and democratic political participation of

the people (the electors were forty percent of the inhabitants); its economy was relatively industrialized and its per capita income was the third highest in Latin America after Argentina and Venezuela, but with a much fairer distribution than Venezuela. It had a high degree of socialization and state intervention, apart from the existence of important companies belonging to the state.¹

By the end of Frei's presidency, although the rate of inflation was over thirty percent per year, participation of workers in the total economy had reached almost fifty-five percent.

From a Marxist point of view, this reality was not a form of socialism but "state capitalism," but without a doubt, it facilitated the way to Marxism. Remember, the large majority of the country—I would say three-fourths of the people—wanted profound structural changes to achieve greater justice through economic development, a fairer distribution of wealth and the eradication of the poverty which still existed for many Chileans.

But among this majority, the differences between the Marxists and non-Marxists were evident. The Marxists wanted to establish a Marxist-Leninist regime while the non-Marxists wanted to reach their objectives within a democracy, freedom and the existence of divergent political parties. Although the Marxist parties had increased their strength, and gave the appearance of great support because of their incessant activity, they still did not amount to thirty percent of the electors.

Within this general frame, and conscious of Chile's undeniable legalistic and democratic tradition, the Marxists created the U.P. coalition with the collaboration of small groups with democratic leftist tendencies. The most important of these groups was the Radical Party, already divided and weakened, but still prestigious. Yet even within this party, many members feared this alliance with the U.P. because of the enormous power wielded by the Marxists.

Not long before the presidential election, the U.P. decided to give first priority to the elaboration of its program; thereafter it would select its presidential candidate. As explained previously, that program was not Marxist. In the economic field, for example, it was very similar to the social democratic postulates of the Radical Party; and in the political field, it proposed making democracy more profound, and guaranteed

1. The following figures, corresponding to the period immediately preceding Allende's election, are eloquent: the public or state sector generated forty percent of the internal product; it paid thirty-three percent of the total wages; it directly made half of the country's investments and, directly and indirectly, contributed to seventy percent of the investments.

respect for the Constitution, freedom, political parties and even, as it expressly established, the opposition.

In order to select the U.P.'s candidate, each party in the U.P. coalition presented a pre-candidate. Thereafter, in a "round-table," utilizing a great number of voting processes, pre-candidates were eliminated. At one point it appeared that the Radical Party pre-candidate might obtain the votes necessary to be the U.P. candidate, but the Communist Party vetoed him openly, stating that the coalition's candidate had to be a Marxist.

Many members of the Radical Party, including myself, thought that because the rules of the game had not been respected the Party should have left the U.P. The Party had been offended, and it had become evident that the Marxists had hidden intentions and were planning to exceed their own program. After months of having held that the important thing was the program and its goals, and not the candidate himself, there could be no other explanation for their demand that the candidate had to be Marxist. But, the leaders of the Radical Party accepted the Communist veto and backed Socialist Allende, who was thus chosen to be the U.P. candidate.

I do not wish to appear as a prophet, but at that time the direction of the U.P. seemed clear to me and I openly proclaimed it. It was clear that the U.P. wanted to use the Radical Party and other non-Marxist groups to give an appearance of broad-based support for its non-Marxist program. But, with a Marxist President, basically backed by two Marxist-Leninist parties and with democratic allies that had demonstrated their submissiveness and lack of personality, it was clear that the government would adopt a Marxist position. Only because more than seventy percent of the Chileans were not Marxist had the U.P. tried to present a non-Marxist program. It seemed probable that, given these factors, the U.P. would be nothing more than a political fraud.

Another very important fact was that within the Socialist Party, to which Allende belonged, there were two distinct factions fighting for a position of predominance. One was formed by those who favored the "pacific and legal route," the route to power through elections; the other was formed by those who favored the "armed route." This latter group followed the orthodox Marxist position that revolutionary violence is both unavoidable and legitimate in fighting against the repressive and armed "bourgeois state." During the Socialist Convention of 1967, Allende had been the leader of the group that defended the "pacific and legal route." Within the party, his group had lost to the group favoring

the "armed route." The disciplined and strong Communist Party favored Allende's position. Because of their position and support, Allende, a representative of the minority wing in his own party, paradoxically became the presidential candidate of the U.P.

Thus, during the campaign and in the first months of the U.P. government, the famous "Chilean road to socialism" was born and developed. It was defined by Allende himself as a new and original route, unique in the world. Pursuant to this plan, the Chilean people would build a socialist society within the Constitution and the law, with ideological and partisan pluralism, and with complete freedom. The "Chilean road to socialism" would skip the stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This new society would be a different one, a curious mixture of democratic and humanistic Marxism. Quoting Allende's words, Chilean socialism "would taste of red wine and empanadas." Personally, I was never able to understand this non-Marxist Marxism; but the "Chilean road" produced astonishment inside and outside of Chile and attracted, no doubt, many democratic people to the U.P. regime.²

2. In 1972, I wrote a number of newspaper articles. In one of them I said:

The Chilean road to socialism is a cliché phrase that everyone must repeat if they wish to avoid being called a reactionary. Even the heads of the parties who do not believe in socialism make use of it in proclaiming the validity of this principle and in protesting against acts of violence they claim infringe it.

It is necessary to notice that where the end of this road leads to has never been clearly determined. The road is constantly mentioned, but care is taken, or was taken, to avoid any mention of its objective. The transition to socialism by the "Chilean road," it is said, is a unique case in the history of mankind because the change from capitalist society to a socialist one is being carried out through pacific and legal means

It is well known that there are different forms of socialism. Some of them combine their essence with the idea of democracy and believe that both concepts complement each other and are inseparable. Therefore, this type requires free political parties; periodic elections through universal, free and secret suffrage; independent state powers; respect for individual rights; and an economic structure that assures justice for the majority and the eradication of the exploitation of one person or class by another.

Other conceptions of socialism—all of them variations of the original Marxist thought—propose the dictatorship of the proletariat, a single political organization (the Communist Party), state ownership of all the means of production and, therefore, the complete and totalitarian concentration of power in the Central Committee of the Communist Party and its authorities. These conceptions entail both a political and an economic dictatorship which are as inseparable for communism as the ideas of socialism and democracy are for the other groups.

Which of these types of socialism is the goal of the "Chilean road?" This has never been clarified, either by the President or any other authority of the regime. Quite to the contrary, until a few months ago, they have been carefully vague and confusing, because in such vagueness and confusion lies the key to painless indoctrination.

Many people today feel part of the "Chilean road to socialism" without realizing that it is an ideological smuggling and, therefore, constitutes a huge collective deception.

The secret documents of the Communist and Socialist parties that are being exposed to public light; the direct comparisons of the Chilean process to the

If you recall what I said previously about the U.P.'s strategy of violating the laws in order to form a "social area" of the economy aimed towards complete state control of economic activity in Chile, ignoring a Congress with a non-Marxist majority and ignoring the Democratic Guarantees Constitutional Amendment, you might conclude with me that this strategy was a principal cause of Chile's serious institutional crisis. The solid democratic structure of the country was taken advantage of by the U.P. to obtain the presidency, and then, having achieved power through a deceitfully democratic program, they attempted to destroy that structure from the inside in order to establish a Marxist-Leninist regime that the majority of the nation rejected. This had never occurred in Chile, and I am sure that no democracy could resist this experience.

It is clear to me that a constitutional system, for its normal and efficient functioning, requires, among other things, good faith and honesty in the application of the rules that define the system. The legal order is not something dead and static. It lives, but only in harmony with those who apply it and give it life. It cannot survive when the authorities secretly wish to destroy it.

At the same time, it is impossible to deny that a particular constitutional norm helped the process. I refer to the rule, already analyzed, that placed in the hands of Congress the election of the President of the Republic between the two candidates who obtained the highest relative majorities when none of the candidates obtained an absolute majority. We saw that Congress had always elected the candidate who had obtained the most votes. This tradition was logical; the majority of Congress—not of the citizens—did not feel authorized to elect the second most popular candidate. This tradition had become so important, that a serious problem could exist if it was not followed. Therefore, the Christian Democracy decided to sustain this tradition and vote for Allende so long as the Democratic Constitutional Guarantees Amendment was approved.

Given the fact that seventy-five percent of the Chilean people were not Marxist, a constitutional system that made possible the election of a

Russian and the Cuban revolutions, designed to emphasize the difference between the means but not the end of the road; the articles in the Communist newspaper about the "transitory" nature of solutions that the U.P. program proclaimed as "definite" and, above all, the fact that the government and the Popular Unity have removed their mask in order to face openly the task of achieving ends never mentioned in the U.P. program, can leave no doubt that the "Chilean road to socialism" represents today the least peaceful and legal way to reach the dictatorship of the proletariat, state control of the economy and the suppression of political parties and a free Congress.

candidate who represented only a small minority with totally discrepant ideas was absurd. Unfortunately, the system of a runoff in a direct election, as in France, could not be applied in Chile due to political passions. Such a system, as I already explained, would have been preferable and would have alleviated political problems. If the citizens were to choose the runoff candidate who had been second in the first election they would have performed an unobjectionable sovereign act.

B. The Attitude of the U.P. Government

There were other things that contributed to the demise of Chilean democracy. First, the sectarianism of the government and the Marxist parties, as well as their growing boldness, led them to denounce all those who were not devoted to the government as being C.I.A. agents, as having sold out to imperialism or as being fascist and anti-patriotic. Second, the extreme left groups, that did not form part of the U.P. coalition, but were close to the regime and whose principal leaders had family ties with the outstanding personalities of the government, tried to increase the conflicts in industry and agriculture by organizing and directing "take-overs." The government officially condemned these groups, and their actions, but that was all. In my opinion, the regime sincerely repudiated these acts, but it was afraid of being accused of being "traitors" to the revolution if it acted to stop them. Insecurity and distrust reached incredible proportions. At one point a high ranking extremist authority threatened to have Santiago's residential areas invaded and ransacked by thousands of workers who lived in shanty towns unless opposition to the regime stopped. The natural reaction of the threatened residents was to obtain arms and to form clandestine militias to fend off possible attacks.

But this was not the only armed faction in Chile. It was widely known that many factory workers were receiving weapons from the most extremist groups with the assistance of the government, which had allowed such groups to manufacture and import the weapons. In response, the opposition introduced a bill in Congress, subsequently passed, forbidding the possession of weapons by any groups other than the armed forces and the police. The armed forces were in charge of enforcing this law. The President, against his wishes did not veto the law, because a veto would have offended the armed forces. The government probably did not realize that this law would be of great assistance to the military in carrying out their coup. Months before the bill was enacted they had already begun searching for weapons. Thousands

of weapons were discovered by the armed forces, which still claims to be discovering such stocks today.

Five months after Allende assumed the presidency, a general election of city councilmen ("regidores") took place. In the election the government obtained fifty percent of the votes. Apparently, its voting power had increased considerably in the short time since the presidential election. But, this "increase" simply reflected an old political habit in Chile. Due to the different lengths of terms for the president, senators, congressmen and councilmen, it was usual that shortly after each presidential election another general election took place. This election was either to elect congressmen or city councilmen. As an empirical fact in such elections, the number of votes for the party of the recently elected president always increased over the votes for the party in the presidential election. It was the manner in which the Chilean electors expressed confidence and support for the new president, and probably was a reflection of the typical human weakness of trying to get close to those who obtain power.

In Allende's case, we have to add other facts: democratic peace and legality had not yet been threatened; the "Chilean road to socialism" still appeared as an attractive dream; and, above all, there had been an economic "boom" in the first few months of Allende's government. This boom had been achieved by an increased utilization of industrial capacities, caused by an increase in consumer demand produced by substantial wage increases, especially for the low-income sectors. The early wage and price policy of the government increased the purchasing power of the poorer sectors and produced a more just distribution of income. This first electoral triumph, however, was interpreted by the government as an unconditional backing by the people. The interpretation gave initial impulse to, and later on fed, the abuses and illegalities I have analyzed.

Subsequent elections showed the uniqueness of the electoral "victory" of the U.P. mentioned above. Because of the death of a deputy, a special election was called in July, 1971, in Valparaiso, Chile's second largest city. In this election the candidate of the opposition won; the government candidate obtaining only forty-eight percent of the votes. At the beginning of 1972, in two special elections, the government was defeated and its electoral strength clearly diminished. Despite these losses, the position of the U.P. became even more hardened.

Soon, in all the elections carried out in Chile the repudiation of the government began to increase within organizations of popular bases and

of clear political significance, such as trade unions, different types of communities and student organizations. In these elections, the winners usually were candidates whose platforms were based solely on their opposition to the U.P. However, the government seemed to ignore all of this. Its totalitarian position continued to harden and on several occasions, when the defeat of government supporters produced great impact because of the election's importance, it looked for an excuse to falsify or to ignore the results. Sometimes, the supporters of the U.P. even created parallel organizations controlled by the Marxist parties. This happened, for example, in the elections of the Confederation of Workers (C.U.T.), the most important union of the country, and in the elections of the Secondary Schools Federation. In the case of the University of Chile Student Federation, an organization of great tradition and influence, the U.P. refused to permit the election to take place.

How could all this happen in a country like Chile? Within the government, two clear currents fought for predominance. One was formed by extremists who favored violence and wanted to accelerate the transformation process, acquiring total power and crushing the opposition in order to impose, as soon as possible, a Leninist-Marxist dictatorship. This current was formed by those who, within the Socialist Party, had favored the "armed route" and by small groups of "ultras," such as the Left Revolutionary Movement (M.I.R.), who wanted to follow Fidel Castro's path. The other current wanted to proceed slowly, consolidating each step, in the search for "total power" while maintaining institutionality and legality as much as possible. This current was mainly formed by communists. Possibly Allende was in this line. The difference between the two currents was in the means, not in the end, for both wanted to establish Leninist-Marxism.

As it always appears to have happened in history, the first group radicalized the process and the second group was unable to prevent the radicalization. To the contrary, in order to maintain its revolutionary colors, the second current was quite often forced to agree with the extremists.

In March, 1973, the opposition obtained an enormous majority in the general congressional elections. But it failed to reach a two-thirds majority, a questionable electoral objective, set prior to the election with a great display of publicity by an extreme right-wing party. The opposition's failure to reach this "goal" allowed Allende to claim a victory for his government and, therefore, he would maintain his position of

establishing socialism in Chile. This socialism was for him—as we have already seen—nothing but Leninist-Marxism.

Together with this sad political picture, the economic state of the country could hardly have been worse. I must be honest and admit that I have not yet been able clearly to understand the reasons for this incredible process. Possibly, we will never know them. The fact is that in two and one-half years the national economy was totally destroyed through the most incredible mistakes. It was no longer a matter of doctrinal disagreement with a Marxist solution by the non-Marxist majority. From any point of view, whether Marxist or conservative, the economic measures of the government were simply unexplainable. Once, in a private conversation, I heard a diplomat from a Marxist country say with annoyance: "This is not Marxism. This is only clumsiness that will lead to chaos."

My doubts about this economic disaster refer to the reasons that led the government to act in the way it did. The alternative explanations are simple: the government was either extremely inept, or it coldly planned economic bankruptcy to use the resulting chaos to obtain "total power" by means of a social revolution directed by the government itself. Even now, after all this time, I am still unable to clarify my doubts.

However, a few examples may help you to formulate your thoughts. The thousands of "take-overs" of farms, which the government tolerated by refusing to assist the dispossessed owners, and the illegal interventions it immediately ordered, led to chaos in the agricultural sector. The "commandeered" farms were not cultivated because they were occupied generally by untrained extremists who had no means of working the land and who only worried about being ready to fight off a "retake-over." Sometimes, in order to survive, the invaders slaughtered the pure-bred cattle, including prized bulls. On the other hand, many of the owners who still retained control of their farms, ceased to work their land because they feared an imminent "take-over" and obviously did not want to invest any money in their farms in case the "take-over" did occur.

In summary, the Chilean countryside, because of the government's passivity, looked like a jungle where the strongest imposed their law. The inevitable result was that agricultural production rapidly decreased to extremes unknown in Chile. Thus, in one year, Chile had to import over 400 million dollars worth of wheat and meat, and, in the following

year, the value of the importation of foodstuffs approached 600 million dollars.³

In the industrial area the situation was as follows: the great number of factories, companies and mines illegally "requisitioned" or "intervened" in an irrational manner as previously explained, were managed as part of the "social area." Frequently, the engineers and other professionals and technicians who had been their executives were replaced by "party comrades" who had no preparation or experience.⁴ At the same time, in order to do a political favor or to achieve full employment rates, the number of workers was increased without limitation. At times, personnel increases reached 100 percent. During the political campaign for the 1973 congressional election, I saw a small "requisitioned" factory where the number of workers was so large that they physically did not fit in it; thus they had to take turns, while some worked, others played soccer.⁵

To cover losses and to be able to pay salaries, thus avoiding complete industrial paralysis, Allende's government continued to print more paper money. This was one of the causes of an inflation that reached astronomical rates never before seen in Chile. At the same time, the lack of supplies increased, manifesting itself in the long lines formed even to buy cigarettes. And, in the Central Bank, the last dollars were being spent.

In August of 1973, the political struggle had reached the breaking point. The constitutional and legal violations had reached extremes. Violence was widespread in the country and in the city streets. The economy had reached its lowest point and the country was paralyzed from Arica to Punta Arenas by a strike of truckers, merchants, managers, union members and professionals; a bloody civil war seemed inevitable.

Cardinal Silva Henriquez, head of the Chilean Roman Catholic Church, invited the government and the Christian Democrat Party, the most powerful opposition party, to a dialogue, in order to prevent the

3. As soon as the military coup stopped this crazy situation simply by re-establishing order, agricultural production increased 20 percent in a year.

4. I know of cases where workers who barely knew how to read and write replaced engineers with years of experience as managers of technologically modern factories.

5. Given these facts nobody should be surprised that the U.P. Minister of Finance himself officially admitted, at the beginning of 1973, that during 1972 the companies incorporated into the "social area" through "requisitions" and "interventions" had produced a net loss of 50,000 million escudos. Before the U.P., the net profit of these companies had reached a similar amount.

catastrophe that everybody saw coming. Both parties accepted the invitation, but no agreement was reached. The government's intransigence in its decision to continue along the same route to Leninist-Marxism made any understanding impossible. The results of this stalemate are now history.

C. CONCLUSION

Some people think that the Constitution of 1925 contributed to the crisis because it permitted the existence of a minority executive. Perhaps, with a well conceived parliamentary regime, as the English one, in which it is mandatory that the executive be a representative of the congressional majority, Allende would have been forced to form a majoritarian government. I do not share this opinion. It is true that an anomaly existed in the Constitution, but a government of clear democratic formation does not need rules to force it to act according to the wishes of the majority. That is the essence of democracy. Many presidents have shifted their political plans in order to obtain the backing of Congress.

On the contrary, the fact is that a president who did not want to compromise and who stubbornly insisted in leading the country in a way that the enormous majority repudiated, would not have changed his course simply because of a constitutional rule. Allende always had the chance to form a progressive government supported by the majority of the Chilean people. But for that, he would have had to abide by the rules of democracy and of the Constitution and to reach an agreement with non-Marxist parties. However, the extremist Marxists never allowed him to do this. Allende either did not dare, or did not want to break with them.

If I were to summarize why in Chile a peaceful solution to the crisis created by the U.P. government was not possible, my opinion would be that the reason lay in the totalitarian and anti-democratic essence of Marxism. Having knowingly been elected to the presidency by a minority of Chileans, the U.P. nevertheless wanted to acquire "total power" by any means, and to lead the country where it did not want to go. Any political agreement of a democratic nature would have meant giving up, for many years, its efforts to establish in Chile a Leninist-Marxist dictatorship. Who could predict when, if ever, a Marxist would again be elected President of Chile? Thus, Marxism preferred to fight until it either succeeded or fell, even if that meant the destruction of the strongest democracy in Latin America and in the entire developing world.

This explains the reasons for the coup of September 11, 1973. It would be a falsehood to say now that the majority of Chile did not feel a sense of peace and relief at that time. Because the coup did not appear to be the work of a "strong man," but was an institutional reaction of the armed forces, it led most Chileans to believe that the nation would very soon return to democracy and to the rule of law, both of which were held so highly in esteem by the Chilean people.

In effect, all the military declarations coincided in expressing that, despite their professionalism and sense of constitutionality, the armed forces had been compelled to intervene and to put an end to the chaos and institutional breakdown proclaimed by Congress, the judiciary and the Contraloría, with the goal of returning the country to a state of democracy, legality and freedom. The very night of the coup, September 11, 1973 all of the members of the Junta declared this to the country on the national television channel. The most emphatic member of the Junta was General Mendoza, who said:

In this important moment of decision, the Chilean Police Force, in forming part of the Junta that today has assumed command on the Nation, has as its objective, the re-establishment of the judicial order that recently has been seriously violated. It is not a question of crushing tendencies or ideological positions, nor is it a question of personal revenge; it is a question of re-establishing public order and returning the country to the path of the Constitution and the law. Therefore, the spirit of the Junta is to return to the real route of legality.

Edict Number Five of the military government stated that the armed forces assumed "power only for the period of time required by circumstances." In Law Decree Number One, which formed the Junta, it was clearly stated that the armed forces had assumed control of the nation "with the patriotic commitment of restoring the broken Chilean spirit, justice and institutionality, aware that this is the only way to be faithful to the national traditions." And, on October 10, 1973, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Admiral Huerta, in his address to the United Nations General Assembly said in the name of the Junta:

The armed forces and the police have assumed the task of guiding the country along the path of law and freedom. Once our goal is achieved, we will not hesitate a minute in retreating to our headquarters and ships. The period of return to normality will be as short as possible, and it will depend, to a great extent, upon the efforts of all Chileans in such a noble task.

But only a year and a half after the coup the military authorities were already saying that they were concerned with objectives and

not periods of time, that politics and the politicians ruined the country, not only during the U.P. government, but long before it, and that today only the armed forces are capable of governing Chile. Among their objectives, that the most important one was the economic development of the country.

Stressing once again the necessity of preparing a new generation of politicians to receive power within a pure nationalism, General Pinochet, leader of the Junta, proclaimed in a speech delivered to the nation's youth on March 1, 1975:

Some interested parties say that this is an emergency government. It is not. They have not understood the problem. This is a government of national salvation, whose mission is to remove the country from the chaos in which it was immersed for many years The present government . . . will not be a simple vacuum cleaner, used to clean the country to have it ready for the return of the politicians. In three years we would be again in chaos The government will be for a well prepared and well intentioned youth. This youth will receive an absolutely clean state.

You can imagine the profound impact of these events on all Chileans. You can also imagine why they are even more painful for someone like myself who has dedicated his whole adult life to the teaching and practice of law. As a long-time professor of law, I would like to conclude these remarks by stating that this hard and terrible experience has served to reinforce in me my dedication to the law. The things that I had thought concerning our civilization and values, have been brutally demonstrated in reality. What had I imagined that has come to pass? Simply stated, it is that the juridical order and respect for law, especially the indispensable guarantees of individual human rights and liberties, constitute the necessary framework to control our innate animalistic nature. This framework has been the result of many thousands of years of man's search for the principles of justice and progress. When these principles are concretely embodied in a system of laws, which are in fact respected and practiced, man can develop the noble and elevated spiritual values of love and kindness, and a consciousness of justice and tolerance. It is hard to destroy the rule of law, especially when, as in the case of Chile, it is backed by a strong tradition. In such cases, one knows when and where the destruction starts, but not where it leads. The result, unfortunately, seems to be that the bestiality which lays within many men is released, to rejoice in brutality,

The goal, therefore, is a new conquest of the juridical order, to be used as a means to justice. Students of the law: I invite you to develop whatever political ideas you honestly and freely believe in. But never forget that a well conceived juridical order must support and guide man's endeavors, and that that order must also be respected and maintained. The destruction of that order and the violation of the principles of justice, which should be the basis of human society, always leads to tragedy. Therefore, I believe that the role of the real lawyer is, and will continue to be, essential to man and society. And, I continue to believe, despite the Chilean tragedy, that the principles of law, liberty, justice, democracy and human dignity, if diligently and courageously fought for, will survive.