

Pivotal Decision Debate: The Chilean Situation of 1973

Background: In 1970, Dr. Salvador Allende became the first democratically elected President of a Latin American country. As the head of the Popular Unity government, he promised to transform the economic reality of Chile to favor the workers, peasants, and farmers. As one of the first steps of his plan, he nationalized the valuable Chilean copper mines in the northern part of the country.

It is September 1, 1973. After a failed attempt by the CIA to prevent Allende's election in 1970, which resulted the kidnapping and death of the leader of the top Chilean general, a number of people in Chile and the United States are concerned about the situation. Many are framing Allende's election and rule as one of the most important Cold War challenges since Castro's takeover of Cuba.

We will engage in three key debates: one in the United States and two in Chile, all of which will help determine the future of Chile and Cold War politics.

Format of the policy debates:

- A) Two students will work together to read, research, discuss, and prepare the position of each character.
- B) The policy debates will take place in fishbowl formats. Only one member of the team will debate at a time while the other member will observe on the outer circle.
- C) The second teammate may "tag-in" at any point and replace the current speaker so as to participate. After some time, they can again reserve positions.

Required Readings

Prior to Lesson 1	<u>Allende, Marxist leader, elected Chile's President</u> <u>Chilean Senate Gives Allende Power to Nationalize US Copper</u> <u>Mr. Allende Follows Outline of Speech</u>
During Lesson 1	Prepare position
Lesson #2	The Debates
After Lesson #2	<u>Unclassified Documents 4, 6, 7</u> <u>9/11: The Day Everything Changed, in Chile</u> <u>A Chilean Dictator's Dark Legacy</u> <u>A Dictator's Double Standard</u>

Here are the facts:

-The platform of Allende's Popular Unity party declared its desire "to transform the present institutions so as to install a new state where workers and the people will have the real exercise of power." It also proposed to "to nationalize those basic sources of wealth such as the large mining companies of copper, iron, nitrate and others that are controlled by foreign capital and internal monopolies."¹

-The United States provided covert support and funds to prevent Salvador Allende from winning the 1970 election. These included funds to the Christian Democratic Party, propaganda activities, leaflets, placements in radio and news media against Allende.

-The CIA provided assistance to militant right-wing groups to undermine Allende.

-In 1970, President Nixon and Henry Kissinger directed the CUA to prevent Allende from taking power, authorizing \$10 million to do so. They needed to either manipulate Congressmen (Track I) or undergo a coup before he took power (Track II)

-A number of Chilean generals considered an overthrow of Allende in 1970. With U.S. (CIA) support, they attempted to kidnap General Rene Schneider who was against the overthrow. Schneider was killed but the attempt failed. The CIA provided tear gas, guns, and ammunition.²

-During his presidency, Allende and the Chilean Congress nationalized the copper industry and the telephone company. The American company ITT held a majority state in the Chilean telephone company.

-Allende wanted to reform health care, agriculture and education. He also wanted to nationalize other farms and business.

-The Chilean economy began to suffer due to inflation, food shortages, and trade deficits. This has led to widespread demonstrations and strikes by 1973.

-One June 29, 1973, a military officer named Roberto Souper led a failed coup against Allende.

For more information, see: <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/12/the-price-of-power/376309/>
<https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol47no3/article03.html>

The Debates

¹ <https://nacla.org/article/popular-unity-government-basic-program>

² <https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/chile/>

Debate #1: President Nixon calls his National Security Council (NSC), his CIA director, and other key stakeholders to determine U.S. policy toward Chile.

Key Questions:

- A) What options does the U.S. have toward Chile?
- B) What policy should the U.S. develop toward Allende and Chile?
- C) Should the U.S. consider regime change or another measure? If the former, how?
- D) What are the risks of getting involved in Chile? What are the benefits?

Debate #2: Socialist President Salvador Allende calls his top advisors for a conference to determine his Cold War foreign policy vis-a-vis the United States and the Soviet Union.

Key Questions:

- E) What political and economic options does Chile have toward the United States?
- F) What political and economic options does Chile have toward the Soviet Union?
- G) Should Chile develop an alliance, an animosity, or remain neutral?
- H) What are the risks and benefits of each position?

Debate #3: Military General Augusto Pinochet, a Conservative anti-Communist leader in Chile, calls other military leaders to discuss their political options amidst the “crisis.”

Key Questions:

- I) Should the military intervene in Chilean politics? Why or why not?
- J) If there is a military intervention, what are the options? What are the benefits and risks?
- K) What policy and action plan should the military take?

The Characters: Debate 1

United States

President Nixon - A Republican President with a foreign policy agenda geared toward improving relations with China and the Soviet Union (detente). Nixon was also concerned with ending the war in Vietnam.

William P. Rogers (Secretary of State) - Sought peace during the Cold War. Signed peace agreement ending Vietnam War. Established cease-fire between Israel and Arabs. Attempted a lasting peace between Israel and Arab neighbors.

Henry Kissinger (National Security Advisor) - Most powerful figure besides Nixon. A “realism” foreign policy that sought to increase U.S. power vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. While he favors detente, he also wants to assure U.S. contains Soviet aggression and neutral countries don’t fall like dominoes.

Frank Milliken - (President of Kennecott) - Kennecott is a major copper corporation, which in 1972 is the world’s largest producer of copper. Some of its major copper mines are in the Chilean north.

William Egan Colby - (Director of CIA) - Leads CIA’s covert operations to support anti-Communist leaders against Soviet-associated parties.

Edward Korry - (Ambassador to Chile) - A Cold War hawk. He views Allende with suspicion and wants to assure no Communist intervention in Chile. He is the official U.S. representative in Chile.

Kubisch, Jack (Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs) - A state department official, he favors policy that will increase respect for the United States in Latin America and that respect the independence of Latin American countries.

The Characters: Debate 2

Chile

Salvador Allende (President) - A Chilean physician, Marxist, Socialist. He won a democratic election. He was a former Senator and cabinet minister. He has adopted a policy of nationalization of resources and industries.

Clodomiro Almeyda Medina (Minister of Foreign Affairs) - A member of the Socialist Party. Appointed by Allende to oversee relations with other countries.

Jose Toha (Vice-President) - Toha is also a journalist, lawyer, and socialist. The son of immigrants from Spain. He is also Minister of the Interior and a member of the Socialist Party’s central committee.

Pedro Vuskovic (Minister of Economy) - A Chilean economist, he is the author of the economic plan implemented by Allende. His policies initially led to an increase in wages but then also high inflation.

The Characters: Debate 3

General Augusto Pinochet (Army commander) - He is a Chilean general and the Commander-in-Chief of the army. He is Conservative and views leftists with great mistrust

General Gustavo Leigh (Head of the Air Force) - Extremely tough, views Marxism as a cancer.

Admiral Jose Toribio Merino (Head of the Navy) - A Conservative who views Socialism as a threat to Chile. He prefers capitalism and respect for Chilean traditions.

Outsiders:

Victor Jara (Teacher, Singer, Activist) - Victor Jara is a famous Chilean singer of the Nueva Cancion movement. His songs like Manifiesto and Venceremos have become extremely popular among leftists. Your role is to study Victor Jara's music and then to write a song to sing, in his style, to support one of the sides in this debate.

Pablo Neruda (Nobel Prize Winner in Literature) - Neruda is the most famous poet in Chile. He is a friend of Salvador Allende and has supported Allende's policies. Read 10 of Neruda's poems to understand his style. Then, write one poem to support Allende, which you will read at a key moment in the debate.