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### Overt Peace, Covert War?: Covert Intervention and the Democratic Peace

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## **Overt Peace, Covert War?: Covert Intervention and the Democratic Peace**

ALEXANDER B. DOWNES AND MARY LAUREN LILLEY

*Proponents and critics of the democratic peace have debated the extent to which covert attempts by democracies to overthrow other elected governments are consistent with or contradict democratic peace theory. The existing debate, however, fails to acknowledge that there are multiple democratic peace theories and that inter-democratic covert intervention might have different implications for different arguments. In this article, we first distill hypotheses regarding covert foreign regime change from three theories of democratic peace. Relying primarily on declassified government documents, we then investigate these hypotheses in the context of U.S. covert intervention in Chile (1970–73). The evidence suggests that covert intervention is highly inconsistent with norms and checks-and-balances theories of democratic peace. The evidence is more consistent with selectorate theory, but questions remain because democratic leaders undertook interventions with a low likelihood of success and a high likelihood that failure would be publicized, which would constitute exactly the type of policy failure that democratic executives supposedly avoid.*

### INTRODUCTION

Democracies, as is now widely known, rarely if ever go to war with one another. Yet there are a number of instances in which democracies have

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covertly used forceful means short of war to remove elected governments from power, a phenomenon we label *covert foreign regime change*. The United States and Great Britain, for example, engineered the downfall of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq in 1953. The United States then helped topple Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz the following year and assisted rebels in Indonesia hoping to overthrow Sukarno in 1957–58. President Dwight D. Eisenhower ordered the CIA to remove Patrice Lumumba, Prime Minister of the Congo, in 1960, and the United States also played an important role in the removal of Cheddi Jagan in British Guyana and João Goulart in Brazil in the 1960s. Most famously, perhaps, the Richard Nixon administration attempted to prevent the Chilean socialist Salvador Allende from taking office in 1970 and later encouraged the Chilean military to depose him.<sup>1</sup>

What are the implications of this practice for theories of democratic peace (DP)? A number of scholars have suggested that inter-democratic covert interventions constitute a possible anomaly for DP. Although these commentators do not always specify which theory of DP they believe is contradicted by inter-democratic covert intervention, those who do generally point to norms arguments. Realist critics, such as Sebastian Rosato, argue that instances of covert regime change among democracies suggest that “democracies do not always treat each other with trust and respect when they have a conflict of interest,” thereby undermining a key plank of norms explanations for DP.<sup>2</sup> With regard to the United States, Stephen Van Evera points out that in nine of the eleven cases “in which elected nationalist or leftist regimes in the Third World have adopted policies that disturbed Washington . . . the United States attempted to overthrow the elected government.” Van Evera concludes that “American leaders have favored democracy only when it has produced governments that support American policy. Otherwise they have sought to subvert democracy.”<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Patrick James and Glenn Mitchell identify what they call the “potential victims of the democratic peace”: weak, isolated democracies, which—by trying to escape a situation of structural

<sup>1</sup> On these cases generally, see John Prados, *Safe for Democracy: The Secret Wars of the CIA* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2009); Michael Grow, *U.S. Presidents and Latin American Interventions: Pursuing Regime Change in the Cold War* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2008); Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* (New York: Doubleday, 2007); Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq* (New York: Times Books, 2006); David F. Schmitz, *The United States and Right-Wing Dictatorships* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Sebastian Rosato, “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory,” *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 4 (November 2003): 590–91; David F. Schmitz, *Thank God They're on Our Side: The United States and Right-Wing Dictatorships, 1921–1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); and David P. Forsythe, “Democracy, War, and Covert Action,” *Journal of Peace Research* 29, no. 4 (November 1992): 385–95. Although Eisenhower ordered Lumumba's removal, and the CIA did plot to assassinate him, Belgium and the UN played a larger role in overthrowing him. Ludo de Witte, *The Assassination of Lumumba*, trans. Ann Wright and Renée Fenby (London: Verso, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Rosato, “Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory,” 590.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Van Evera, “The Case against Intervention,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, July 1990, 76.

dependence on a powerful democracy—threaten the economic interests of that state.<sup>4</sup> According to James and Mitchell, “Covert attacks provide a serious challenge to the cultural premise of democratic peace”; such interventions, Rosato writes, suggest that “democratic trust and respect has often been subordinated to security and economic interests.”<sup>5</sup>

Realists are not the only scholars to acknowledge that covert intervention among democracies occurs and constitutes an anomaly for DP. In an otherwise cautiously optimistic assessment of the peace-inducing effects of the spread of democracy, for example, Georg Sørensen notes that the quality of relations among the advanced democracies in the Northern Hemisphere has not been replicated in their relations with the newer democracies in the South. After reviewing several cases of inter-democratic intervention, Sørensen writes that “these and other examples are hardly evidence of Kant’s expectation about democracies developing peaceful relations based on a common understanding and a shared moral foundation.” Echoing the realist sentiments above, Sørensen argues that “the USA turns against some democracies because it fears that they will hurt US economic interests, or they will develop into communist regimes which threaten US security, or they will do both.”<sup>6</sup>

Democratic peace theorists themselves recognize that cases of covert intervention among democracies represent a challenge to at least some DP theories. Proponents of theories grounded in democratic institutions, for example, point to such interventions as providing ammunition against norms arguments. According to Dan Reiter and Allan Stam, “The normative theory in straightforward terms forecasts that democracies would not use any means, overt or covert, to subvert or overthrow another democratically elected government, as such action would clearly be a violation of democratic norms.”<sup>7</sup> Finally, otherwise staunch defenders of DP concede that “instances of American military interventions against other, weaker democratic regimes” are “among the starkest empirical anomalies for democratic peace theory.”<sup>8</sup>

Yet this conclusion is far from universal. Scholars of the democratic peace have offered three counterarguments for why covert interventions against democratic or quasi-democratic governments are consistent with DP. First, they maintain that states targeted by democracies for covert intervention were not actually democratic, and thus the restraints imposed by joint

<sup>4</sup> Patrick James and Glenn E. Mitchell II, “Targets of Covert Pressure: The Hidden Victims of the Democratic Peace,” *International Interactions* 21, no. 1 (July 1995): 92.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 91; and Rosato, “Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory,” 591.

<sup>6</sup> Georg Sørensen, “Kant and Processes of Democratization: Consequences for Neorealist Thought,” *Journal of Peace Research* 29, no. 4 (November 1992): 405.

<sup>7</sup> Dan Reiter and Allan C. Stam, *Democracies at War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 160.

<sup>8</sup> David Kinsella, “No Rest for the Democratic Peace,” *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 3 (August 2005): 455.

democracy did not operate. Second, advocates of DP argue that covert interventions fail to cross the threshold of one thousand battle deaths to qualify as a war, and as a rule did not pit combat forces from the two states against one another. Third, DP's defenders assert that because intervention was covert, it in fact offers evidence of democratic restraints at work: leaders were forced to pursue their interests hidden from view for fear of public disapproval of the overt use of force against another democracy.<sup>9</sup>

In this article, we investigate the veracity of these counterarguments and the compatibility of covert intervention with normative and institutional theories of democratic peace in the context of U.S. covert intervention in Latin America. Relying primarily on declassified government documents, we trace the decision-making processes of U.S. elites involved in attempts to overthrow the government of Salvador Allende in Chile (1970–73). There is no doubt that the involvement of the United States in this case remained well below the level of open warfare. Other aspects of the intervention, however, raise serious questions regarding the extent to which it is consistent with different theories of DP. We find, for example, that the governmental institutions of Chile at the time were democratic according to widely acknowledged and recognized operational measures of democracy, and the Chilean political system was characterized by strong democratic norms. More importantly, U.S. government officials—contrary to some of their public rhetoric—perceived the Allende regime to be legitimate and democratic. Furthermore, we find little evidence that American officials feared domestic disapproval for overthrowing democratic governments. On the contrary, officials worried far more about the reaction of other states, particularly in Latin America, and the potential damage these actions could cause to the U.S.'s reputation should American involvement become publicly known. Finally, the overthrow of Allende led directly to fifteen years of repressive dictatorship under General Augusto Pinochet that set back the cause of democracy in Chile.

We conclude from this analysis that covert foreign regime change by democracies against other democracies is inconsistent with explanations of democratic peace based in liberal or democratic norms and institutional checks and balances. Norms theories contend that democracies externalize their domestic norms of peaceful conflict resolution and respect for individual autonomy in their relations with other democracies, leading to relations characterized by trust, respect, and nonintervention. It is incompatible with

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<sup>9</sup> For a work that mounts all three of these defenses, see Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 121–24. For others that mention at least one of them, see Forsythe, "Democracy, War, and Covert Action"; Kinsella, "No Rest for the Democratic Peace"; Michael Doyle, "Three Pillars of the Democratic Peace," *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 3 (August 2005): 463–66; Jaechun Kim, "U.S. Covert Action in Indonesia in the 1960s: Assessing the Motives and Consequences," *Journal of International and Area Studies* 9, no. 2 (December 2002): 68; and Harvey Starr, "Democracy and Integration: Why Democracies Don't Fight Each Other," *Journal of Peace Research* 34, no. 2 (May 1997): 158.

norms arguments for a democracy to support the violent overthrow of another democratic regime, particularly when decision makers recognize that the target state is a democracy. Chile is a crucial (most likely) case for norms arguments because Chile's identity as a democracy was widely acknowledged and was perceived as such by policy makers at the time. Yet U.S. security concerns about Chile possibly becoming a communist outpost in the Western Hemisphere, as well as the deleterious effect on U.S. credibility that would follow, clearly trumped any normative restraints on toppling a democratic regime. Realists are thus correct to point to the Chilean case as offering important evidence against norms arguments for DP.

Similarly, the evidence from Chile is inconsistent with the institutional checks and balances logic, which maintains that the many veto points inherent in democratic institutions slow preparations for war, reducing fears of surprise attack, and providing ample time to resolve inter-democratic disputes via diplomacy. Importantly, the checks and balances argument assumes that debates about the use of force are public; covert action, however, avoids public debate and hence checks and balances cannot operate. The ubiquity of democratic covert interventions suggests that checks and balances are not very constraining. Checks and balances theorists might respond that interventions against democracies are driven into the covert realm by policy makers' fear that such actions if attempted overtly would be blocked by veto players elsewhere in the government. However, we were unable to uncover much evidence that policy makers acted covertly in Chile to avoid public disapproval or roadblocks erected by other institutional actors, but found abundant evidence of leaders citing potential negative reactions from other countries to bolster the case for acting secretly. Again, the constraints of joint democracy proved fairly weak in the face of security and credibility concerns.

Covert operations are seemingly more compatible with newer institutional arguments that emphasize how leaders' accountability to a large selectorate causes them to seek public policy success abroad to ensure reelection at home.<sup>10</sup> The main constraint accountability imposes on leaders is the need for their foreign policy ventures to be successful. Picking on weak targets that are easy to defeat and installing authoritarian leaders who are not responsible to their own electorates (and thus can hew closely to the intervening state's interests) are each consistent with the selectorate model.<sup>11</sup> Covert interventions, however, are often undertaken despite low likelihoods

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<sup>10</sup> Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, James D. Morrow, Randolph M. Siverson, and Alastair Smith, "An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace," *American Political Science Review* 93, no. 4 (December 1999): 791–807; and Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003). The term "selectorate" refers to the part of the body politic that participates in choosing the leader.

<sup>11</sup> Why powerful democracies like the United States or Great Britain would perceive weak democratic states as threatening is left unexplained.

of success, and some interventions—as exemplified by the Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961—fail publicly and spectacularly, representing just the type of policy failure democratic leaders seek to avoid. Democratic executives who act secretly should also be more likely to work for the benefit of private as opposed to public interests because covert activity is inherently unaccountable. Yet we find that leaders typically responded to what they viewed as real (if possibly exaggerated) security concerns and mobilized private actors in pursuit of government policy, rather than the other way around.

This article proceeds as follows. First, we define the term “covert intervention” and discuss its various forms. Second, we summarize the norms and institutions explanations for democratic peace and draw out the implications of these arguments for covert intervention by one democracy against another. Third, we present a case study of attempted covert regime change by the United States in Chile using the process-tracing method to assess the norms and institutions propositions. The final section summarizes our arguments, discusses their implications, and provides suggestions for further research.

## DEFINING COVERT INTERVENTION

Covert action is defined by the 1991 Intelligence Authorization Act as “an activity or activities conducted by an element of the United States Government to influence political, economic, or military conditions abroad so that the role of the United States Government is not intended to be apparent or acknowledged publicly.”<sup>12</sup> More generally, covert action is “the attempt by a government to influence events in another state or territory without revealing its involvement.”<sup>13</sup> Covert intervention can include a range of activities from “efforts to overthrow certain foreign governments, and to provide others with economic and military assistance” to “supporting political parties, disseminating deceptive propaganda, and organizing strikes, demonstrations, and riots.”<sup>14</sup> Although David Forsythe contends that “covert interventions, by their very nature, are difficult to pinpoint in time, place, and detail,” the case examined in this paper is well-documented.<sup>15</sup> Large numbers of declassified documents have been released confirming and detailing much of the

<sup>12</sup> Available at [http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/library/congress/1990\\_cr/s900803-ia.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/library/congress/1990_cr/s900803-ia.htm). The existing literature tends to use the term covert action; we prefer covert intervention because it specifically connotes secret interference in the affairs of another state. For convenience, we use the terms “covert action,” “covert intervention,” and “covert foreign regime change” interchangeably.

<sup>13</sup> Kim, “U.S. Covert Action in Indonesia in the 1960s,” 63.

<sup>14</sup> Allan E. Goodman, ed. *The Need to Know* (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1992), 4. On the gamut of covert operations, see also Prados, *Safe for Democracy*, 19–20.

<sup>15</sup> Forsythe, “Democracy, War, and Covert Action,” 385. This is true of a growing number of American Cold War covert interventions, such as Guatemala in 1954, owing to the release of U.S. government documents.

American role in attempts to prevent Allende's ascension to the presidency and then to unseat him.<sup>16</sup> There is thus no doubt that U.S. involvement in Chile was indeed a case of covert intervention.

This paper focuses on a particular type of covert intervention: secret attempts by one country to overthrow the government of another, or what we call covert foreign regime change. These are cases in which agents of a foreign government—particularly the intelligence services, but also members of the diplomatic corps, foreign service officers, and the military—work with local actors in the target state to overthrow the leader and replace him with someone else. The intervener rarely employs its own military forces directly against the target, instead inducing and/or assisting indigenous elements in the targeted state's military to topple their leader; arming and sponsoring rebel forces outside the military to launch a rebellion; or hiring mercenaries to do the job. For example, the CIA armed and trained a small army of 1,500 Cuban exiles and landed them at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961 to topple Fidel Castro.<sup>17</sup> American pilots bombed targets in Guatemala and Indonesia in support of campaigns against Arbenz in 1954 and Sukarno in 1958.<sup>18</sup>

In other cases, covert attempts to bring about regime change in a target state employ nonviolent means, such as diplomatic support, cash, or anti-regime propaganda. In South Vietnam, for example, the John F. Kennedy administration decided in August 1963 that President Ngo Dinh Diem must go, and American officials made it clear to the generals involved in plotting a coup that the United States would not oppose them.<sup>19</sup> Financial support almost always plays a role in covert operations. The CIA spent millions to bankroll the Christian Democrats and keep the communists out of power in Italy in the years after World War II.<sup>20</sup> Finally, the intervener's intelligence assets often invest heavily in producing and spreading anti-regime propaganda in order to turn the local population against its leadership, sometimes going so far as to organize antigovernment demonstrations or riots. The CIA, for example, produced and disseminated large amounts of propaganda against Mossadeq's government in Iran in 1953 and also employed Iranians to organize demonstrations and riots in Tehran to foment chaos.<sup>21</sup> As one

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<sup>16</sup> We discuss these documents and where they can be found in the methodology section below. One recent book that makes extensive use of these documents is Peter Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability* (New York: New Press, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> Howard Jones, *The Bay of Pigs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 96.

<sup>18</sup> On bombing by American pilots in Guatemala and Indonesia, see, respectively, Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*, exp. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 171–209; and John Prados, *Presidents' Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations from World War II through the Persian Gulf* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996), 140–44.

<sup>19</sup> Kinzer, *Overtbrow*, 148–69.

<sup>20</sup> Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes*, 26–27.

<sup>21</sup> Donald N. Wilber, "Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran, November 1952–August 1953," CIA Clandestine Service History, March 1954, available at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB28/>.

CIA operative later put it, “That mob that came into north Tehran and was decisive in the overthrow was a mercenary mob. . . . It had no ideology, and that mob was paid with American dollars.”<sup>22</sup>

Covert foreign regime change is not promulgated by intelligence agencies run amok, however. In every case examined for this study, there was a decision at the presidential level either to depose the targeted regime or allow it to be deposed. Covert intervention to unseat foreign leaders is thus a policy debated and decided at the highest levels of government, although it is not always shared widely within the government or with the public.

## IMPLICATIONS OF DEMOCRATIC PEACE THEORIES FOR COVERT INTERVENTION

The democratic peace proposition maintains that democracies have never, or rarely, fought each other. Theories purporting to explain DP generally fall into two categories depending on whether they cite the norms or institutions characteristic of democracies as explanatory variables. The next two subsections unpack the norms model and its implications for covert intervention, while the following sections do the same for the institutional models.

### The Norms Model

Normative models of DP argue that democracies externalize certain domestic norms in their foreign relations, which leads to peace among democracies, but can bring about conflict between democracies and non-democracies. One such norm is nonviolent conflict resolution, thought to be inherent to the democratic process. For example, it is considered illegitimate in a democracy to threaten or use violence against the political opposition. Instead, conflicts are resolved by negotiation and compromise. Parties agree to leave office when defeated in elections provided their opponents do likewise, a facet of democracy William Dixon calls “contingent consent.”<sup>23</sup> In their dealings with other states, “the culture, perceptions, and practices that permit compromise and the peaceful resolution of conflicts without the threat of violence within countries come to apply across national boundaries toward other democratic countries.”<sup>24</sup> Given that a democracy can expect the same diplomatic approach from fellow democracies, it is unlikely that conflicts will escalate to war.

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<sup>22</sup> Richard Cottam, quoted in Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, 2003), 180.

<sup>23</sup> William J. Dixon, “Democracy and the Peaceful Settlement of International Conflict,” *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 1 (March 1994): 14–32.

<sup>24</sup> Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace*, 33.

A second norm thought to keep the peace among democracies is the liberal norm of respect for individual autonomy and rights. Liberal institutions are designed to protect these rights from undue infringement by the state. Just as the basic postulate of liberal theory domestically is that individuals have the right to be free from arbitrary authority, the basic postulate of liberal international theory, according to Michael Doyle, is that states have the right to be free from foreign intervention. "In short," Doyle writes, "domestically just republics, which rest on consent, presume foreign republics to be also consensual, just, and therefore deserving of accommodation."<sup>25</sup> Governments that repress their citizens, however, are not deserving of trust and respect because they are at war with their own people, and liberal states may end up fighting such states.

### Implications of the Norms Model for Covert Intervention

Peaceful norms of conflict resolution and nonintervention in the affairs of democracies would seem to prohibit not only open warfare, but lower levels of aggressive action between democracies as well. The model predicts that democracies should be able to resolve conflicts with other democracies diplomatically via negotiations, concessions, and accommodation. In fact, Christopher Layne—in a critique leveled primarily at norms arguments—contends that "policymaking elites should refrain from making military threats against other democracies and should refrain from making preparations to carry out threats."<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, even small-scale aggression among democracies is unacceptable to normative explanations of the DP in two ways. First, Doyle argues that "the basic postulate of liberal international theory holds that states have the right to be free from foreign intervention."<sup>27</sup> Democracies violate this liberal injunction if they pursue covert intervention, especially against other democratic states. Second, normative theories of DP rely heavily on the externalization of domestic norms. Bruce Russett points out in reference to democracies that "the same structures and behaviors that 'we' assume will limit our aggression, both internally and externally, may be expected similarly to limit similarly governed people in other polities."<sup>28</sup> Covert intervention against other democracies fails to respect their rights to autonomy and also fails to resolve conflicts in a nonviolent manner. Indeed, some DP theorists have accepted Rosato's critique that "at least some . . . American interventions are at odds with the normative logic of the theory."<sup>29</sup> The most basic prediction of the norms approach is thus that

<sup>25</sup> Michael W. Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part 1," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12, no. 3 (Summer 1983): 230.

<sup>26</sup> Christopher Layne, "Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace," *International Security* 19, no. 2 (Autumn 1994): 13.

<sup>27</sup> Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part 1," 213.

<sup>28</sup> Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace*, 31–32.

<sup>29</sup> Kinsella, "No Rest for the Democratic Peace," 455.

democracies should not conspire to overthrow the governments of other democracies.

*Counterargument 1: Target not a democracy.* Defenders of the normative logic maintain that covert intervention by one democracy against other seemingly democratic states does not contradict the norms model because the states targeted by democracies have either been non-democracies, or—at best—weak, unconsolidated democracies.<sup>30</sup> According to Russett, for example, targets of covert intervention by democracies have not been “fully democratic according to the criteria that have been applied here for late twentieth-century regimes; rather, they were all anocracies.”<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Doyle notes that although many of the regimes targeted for intervention by the United States during the Cold War “were more progressive and popular than any previous regime in those countries (and, in some cases, since),” that fact “did not make them well-established liberal democracies. Many U.S. officials doubted their stability as democracies.”<sup>32</sup> For this reason, Russett and Doyle claim that covert intervention does not undermine norms explanations, which do not require democracies to refrain from aggression against non-democratic states. It follows that targets of regime change by democracies are not actually democratic.

*Norms Hypothesis 1: Targets of covert intervention by democracies should not be characterized by democratic norms and institutions.*

Scholars, of course, often disagree regarding the degree to which certain states are democratic. Arguably it is more important what the key decision makers themselves think about the regime type of the target state. John Owen, for instance, argues that policy makers will treat a foreign state in the ways predicted by democratic peace theory only if they perceive it to be a democracy.<sup>33</sup> A second norms hypothesis would thus stipulate that elites in the intervening state describe the target as a non-democracy, which would reinforce the assertion that “target states were not democratic enough to be trusted and respected.”<sup>34</sup> Evidence that decision makers believed that the target was a democracy would undermine the argument that democracies exclusively target non-democracies.

*Norms Hypothesis 2: Democratic policy makers should describe targets of covert intervention as non-democratic.*

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<sup>30</sup> Forsythe, “Democracy, War, and Covert Action,” 393; Kinsella, “No Rest for the Democratic Peace,” 455; and Doyle, “Three Pillars of the Democratic Peace,” 465.

<sup>31</sup> Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace*, 121.

<sup>32</sup> Doyle, “Three Pillars of the Democratic Peace,” 465.

<sup>33</sup> John M. Owen, “How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace,” *International Security* 19, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 87–125; and Owen, *Liberal Peace, Liberal War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

<sup>34</sup> Rosato, “Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory,” 591.

This should be a fairly easy test for the argument given the tendency, observed by Ido Oren, for leaders to redefine the regime types of other countries based not on their actual institutions, which may remain unchanged, but on the adversarial quality of relations with the state in question.<sup>35</sup> If we fail to observe such a rhetorical shift in the face of deteriorating relations, but rather a bald-faced acknowledgement that the other state is a democracy, this would constitute especially strong evidence against the norms argument.

*Counterargument 2: Covert intervention is not war.* A second defense of the norms model contends that covert intervention is consistent with DP because even if the targets were democratic, the outcome of the action was not war as it is commonly defined: “these were not wars, openly fought by military units of the United States,” according to Russett. “They were low-cost operations designed to minimize public attention.” Russett also makes it clear that in past covert operations, “American military units did not fight in an organized fashion.”<sup>36</sup> The claim here is that regardless of what policies the United States pursued, in the end no large-scale war resulted; soldiers of the democratic state did not participate in any direct combat on the ground, thereby generating little risk of casualties for the democracy.

The absence of large-scale war as a result of covert intervention does not necessarily vindicate the norms model, as discussed above, because the argument stipulates that democracies are able to resolve conflicts of interest by negotiation and compromise and refrain from intervention in each others’ internal affairs. What other predictions about outcomes of covert intervention flow from normative explanations? One such outcome concerns the type of regime that is brought to power by intervention in the target state. Since democracies respect the rights of their citizens and are peaceful in their relations with each other, the common practice of replacing an elected regime with a dictator through covert intervention also appears to challenge norms arguments. Spreading democracy in the international system also decreases the likelihood of war, so one might anticipate that the regimes installed by democratic intervention would at a minimum be more democratic than their predecessors, if not full-fledged democracies. Democratic leaders understand that establishing autocratic regimes is risky since such governments are inherently aggressive. States governed by democratic institutions are peaceful toward other democracies, and thus democratic interveners should leave new democracies in their wake.

*Norms Hypothesis 3: New regimes established in the wake of democratic covert intervention should at a minimum be more democratic than their predecessors and at a maximum be full democracies.*

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<sup>35</sup> Ido Oren, “The Subjectivity of the ‘Democratic’ Peace: Changing U.S. Perceptions of Imperial Germany,” *International Security* 20, no. 2 (Fall 1995): 147–84.

<sup>36</sup> Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace*, 123.

Although no norms scholar explicitly voices this hypothesis, it is consistent with the core principles of the norms argument, which provide no reasons why democracies should bring authoritarian governments to power in other states. Indeed, Michael Doyle notes that an important failing of liberal democratic foreign policy toward weak non-democracies has been a “liberal imperialism that promotes liberalism neither abroad nor at home.” A liberal foreign policy properly understood, according to Doyle, “must attempt to promote liberal principles abroad: to secure basic human needs, civil rights, and democracy.”<sup>37</sup>

*Counterargument 3: Internal constraint.* A third defense of the norms argument assumes the existence of some interventions by democracies against other elected governments and seeks to explain why these interventions take the form that they do. This “internal constraint” argument claims that the covert nature of the intervention is proof of DP because an overt attack on another democracy would provoke a public furor. Democratic leaders are thus acting strategically by going behind the backs of the public to avoid disapproval. According to Harvey Starr, for example, “the fact that covert operations against democracies would be roundly denounced across the political spectrum, would lead democratic leaders to hide such activities.”<sup>38</sup> Similarly, Russett argues that covert intervention is actually evidence of democratic processes at work: “The normative restraints of democracy were sufficient to drive the operations under-ground amid circumstances when the administration otherwise might well have undertaken an overt intervention.”<sup>39</sup> According to these arguments, the leadership’s need to undertake intervention covertly validates the normative constraints posited by DP theorists. Liberal and democratic norms make it illegitimate to take military action against another democracy, and the public—imbued with these norms—would oppose such a move.<sup>40</sup>

*Norms Hypothesis 4: Democratic leaders target other democracies covertly because they fear their domestic constituents oppose overt intervention.*

Norms arguments for democratic peace, in sum, imply that covert action by a democracy should occur only if the target of intervention is non-democratic. Covert interventions should also bring to power a democratic regime. If an intervention against a democratic target should for some reason

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<sup>37</sup> Michael W. Doyle, “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part 2,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12, no. 4 (Autumn 1983): 331, 344.

<sup>38</sup> Starr, “Democracy and Integration,” 158; see also Kim, “U.S. Covert Action in Indonesia in the 1960s,” 68.

<sup>39</sup> Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace*, 124. Russett refers to the Ronald Reagan administration’s covert support for the contras in Nicaragua.

<sup>40</sup> The checks and balances of democratic institutions should also restrict open attacks on fellow democracies, forcing such aggression underground. We discuss this in the next section.

take place, it should be concealed because of the fear that leaders' domestic audiences disapprove of intervening against other democracies. In the next section, we turn to the implications for covert action of institutional arguments.

### Institutional Models

Institutional explanations for DP look at aspects of democratic structures for answers to the puzzle of inter-democratic peace.

*Checks and balances.* The first wave of institutional explanations, which was popular through the mid-1990s, argued that democracies were constrained from pursuing wars against other democracies by features of democratic government, such as checks and balances, separation of powers, transparency, and the need to enlist the support of the public. These institutional facets of democracy make preparing for war a complex, laborious, and time-consuming process "as the leaders of various institutions are convinced and formal approval is obtained."<sup>41</sup> The mobilization process is not only slow but also very public, ensuring that other states will not fear a surprise attack by a democracy. Thus, if two democracies experience a clash of interests, there should be plenty of time to resolve the dispute via negotiations since neither country can quickly or secretly resort to force.<sup>42</sup>

*Selectorate theory.* A second wave of theorizing about the institutional sources of DP de-emphasizes veto points and slow mobilization in favor of leaders' accountability to the public. In democracies, the portion of the citizenry that participates in selecting national leaders in elections (known as the selectorate) is typically very large, too large for any leader to reward each individual who votes for him (members of the "winning coalition") with money, property, or some other private benefit. Leaders must rely on delivering public policy successes to keep their supporters happy and to prevent them from defecting to an opposition party or candidate. In non-democracies, by contrast, the absence of elections or legislative processes means that the number of people whose support is required to keep the leader in power is quite small, making it possible to buy them off with private goods. Policy success is thus not very important for autocratic leaders to remain in power.<sup>43</sup>

These institutional incentives have consequences for foreign policy. For democratic leaders, losing a war—or fighting a costly, stalemated war—is a public policy failure that sharply increases leaders' risk of losing office. To avoid the possibility of this outcome, democratic executives exercise caution

<sup>41</sup> Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace*, 38.

<sup>42</sup> Rosato, "Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory," 587.

<sup>43</sup> This logic is laid out most completely in Bueno de Mesquita et al., "An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace"; and Bueno de Mesquita et al., *Logic of Political Survival*.

in the sorts of wars they initiate, choosing only those conflicts they believe they are likely to win, a consequence of democratic institutions often referred to as a “selection effect.”<sup>44</sup> Moreover, once engaged in a military conflict, leaders in democracies pour greater resources into the war to ensure that they prevail. Given that democracies invest large amounts of resources and are highly selective in choosing their targets, democracies avoid picking fights with other democracies because each knows that the resulting war is likely to be costly, and victory is by no means guaranteed.<sup>45</sup>

### Implications of Institutional Theories for Covert Intervention

*Checks and balances.* The ability of democracies to act covertly to overthrow other democratic governments violates institutional constraint arguments that emphasize checks and balances and separation of powers. These arguments assume that decisions for war are made openly and that the executive must therefore gain the backing of much of the public. Acknowledging that presidents and prime ministers can act in secret is to admit that institutional constraints simply do not apply in some undetermined percentage of cases.<sup>46</sup> Defenders of the checks and balances proposition might reply—similarly to the norms theorists—that democratic separation of powers is what drives interventions aimed at other democracies into the covert realm: veto players in Congress or the judiciary would block actions targeting democratic regimes.<sup>47</sup>

*Checks and Balances Hypothesis 1: Leaders act covertly against other democracies because the checks and balances inherent in democratic institutions prevent them from acting openly.*

*Selectorate theory.* What does the selectorate model of democratic politics imply for covert intervention by one democracy against another? According to this argument, the peace that exists between democracies is a cold peace of deterrence: since all regimes with large selectorates and winning coalitions (the portion of the selectorate that actually voted for the leader)

<sup>44</sup> On this argument, see also Reiter and Stam, *Democracies at War*, chap. 2.

<sup>45</sup> Bueno de Mesquita et al., “An Institutional Explanation for the Democratic Peace,” and *Logic of Political Survival*. For different democratic war-fighting arguments, see Reiter and Stam, *Democracies at War*, chap. 3; and David A. Lake, “Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War,” *American Political Science Review* 86, no. 1 (March 1992): 24–37.

<sup>46</sup> As Goodman puts it, “Because covert action is secret, deceptive, and intended as deniable, it carries an inherent risk: an administration could—without the knowledge of citizens or even Congress—bypass procedures of accountability in the conduct of foreign policies and military activities.” Goodman, *Need To Know*, 10. This secrecy may occur quite frequently: Weiner asserts that Eisenhower ordered 170 major covert operations during his presidency, and Kennedy followed with 163 more in his three years in office. Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes*, 180.

<sup>47</sup> Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace*, 124.

have incentives to fight hard in war, targeting another democracy is likely to result in a costly conflict. However, this rule only applies when the other democracy has the ability to pour large amounts of resources into a conflict. Democracies that are small and/or poor are unable to put up much resistance, and thus powerful democracies should not be deterred from targeting them overtly or covertly.<sup>48</sup>

*Selectorate Hypothesis 1: Targets of covert intervention by democracies should be much less powerful than the intervening state.*

The selectorate theory also posits a powerful selection effect whereby fear of the policy failure of losing a war induces leaders to exercise caution when choosing which wars to fight. This implies that democratic leaders need a high threshold of confidence in victory before they will authorize intervention. This requirement is mediated in cases of covert intervention, however, by the possibility that failures will go undiscovered. When intervention is undertaken secretly, leaders can engage in riskier behavior because it is not certain that failed operations will become public.<sup>49</sup> However, there is often a non-trivial chance that covert operations will unexpectedly turn disastrous for policy makers.<sup>50</sup> The most famous example is the Bay of Pigs fiasco, which proved highly embarrassing to the newly inaugurated John F. Kennedy.<sup>51</sup> Although the president repeatedly demanded changes in the invasion plans to maintain “plausible deniability” of U.S. involvement, the impending invasion of Cuba by CIA-supported exiles was front-page news well before the operation was ever launched.<sup>52</sup> Once the operation was underway, efforts to conceal the U.S.’s role blew up in the administration’s face when the press discovered that photos of aircraft flown to the United States by supposed

<sup>48</sup> Bueno de Mesquita et al., “Institutional Explanation for the Democratic Peace,” 801.

<sup>49</sup> Some analysts contend that the avoidance of public discussion and consent characteristic of covert action is responsible for the mixed record of democratic covert interventions, in effect causing “democratic foreign policy . . . to converge with nondemocratic foreign policy.” Reiter and Stam, *Democracies at War*, 162.

<sup>50</sup> Targets of covert intervention also have major incentives to publicize failed attempts by outside powers to overthrow their regimes in the hope that exposure of the nefarious plot will force the intervener to back off.

<sup>51</sup> Some might question whether the Bay of Pigs was a fiasco given that President Kennedy’s approval ratings increased in the aftermath of the failed invasion. The president certainly viewed it as a disaster at the time. Kennedy, for example, admitted to his recently defeated rival, Richard Nixon, that the Bay of Pigs was “the worst experience of my life.” He told Richard Bissell of the CIA that if the United States was a parliamentary democracy he would have had to resign, but since it was not, Bissell would have to resign. Jones, *Bay of Pigs*, 131; and Trumbull Higgins, *The Perfect Failure: Kennedy, Eisenhower, and the CIA at the Bay of Pigs* (New York: Norton, 1987), 161. The uptick in Kennedy’s approval rating, however, does contradict the selectorate model’s assumption that foreign policy failures are punished by leaders’ domestic audiences.

<sup>52</sup> These revelations prompted President Kennedy to lament that Castro “doesn’t need agents over here. . . . All he has to do is read our papers.” Jones, *Bay of Pigs*, 43, 68.

Cuban defectors actually depicted U.S. aircraft.<sup>53</sup> As U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Adlai Stevenson cabled to Washington during the crisis, “Everyone, of course, friend or foe, believes we have engineered this revolution and no amount of denials will change their minds.”<sup>54</sup>

Democratic leaders obviously hope to avoid foreign policy imbroglions like the Bay of Pigs, which might result in a backlash among the voters. It follows that democratic leaders will authorize covert interventions only if they are highly confident of success or very confident that failure will remain secret.

*Selectorate Hypothesis 2: Democratic leaders will intervene covertly if success is very likely or if failure is very likely to be undiscovered.*

A third implication of the selectorate model is that democratic interveners install autocracies rather than leaving new democracies in their wake, based on the following logic. The main difference between democracies and autocracies is that leaders in the former have no choice but to be responsive to the wishes of their electorates if they hope to remain in power, whereas autocrats are under no such compulsion and may act as they wish since their rule does not depend on meeting public demands. When a democracy intervenes abroad, it must achieve its stated policy objective for the intervention to be perceived as a success by the intervener’s selectorate. As Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George Downs argue, “The costs of military intervention are usually large enough that a failure to obtain the promised policy goals in the aftermath will threaten the political survival of the leader of the intervening state.” Because elected leaders are bound by the interests of their domestic constituency, democratic interveners prefer to empower autocratic leaders in the target state who will be more likely to implement the policies preferred by the intervener. “Knowing the inherent conflict of interests that exists,” Bueno de Mesquita and Downs write,

the democratic leader of the intervening state will choose the safer and less costly strategy of supporting the establishment (or continued existence) of an autocracy or a rigged election democracy in the target state. Such a regime will be less concerned with delivering to its citizens public goods-related policies that might conflict with the goals of the intervener and more concerned with private goods (for example, foreign aid and military assistance) that the intervening leader will be willing to supply

<sup>53</sup> The “defectors” in fact were Cuban exiles flying aircraft provided by the CIA.

<sup>54</sup> Telegram from the Mission to the United Nations to the Department of State, 19 April 1961, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) 1961–1963*, vol. 10, 148. All *FRUS* documents cited herein are available online at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus>.

in exchange for permitting it to achieve the policy goals that motivated the intervention in the first place.<sup>55</sup>

This logic implies the following hypothesis:

*Selectorate Hypothesis 3: New regimes established in the wake of democratic covert intervention should be non-democracies.*

This logic is not uncontested, however. Although it is possible that a pliable dictator might be more likely than a democratic regime to implement policies compatible with the intervener's national interests, the problem is that this clientelistic relationship is highly contingent on the installed leader remaining in power, which cannot be taken for granted. In August 1839, for example, British forces replaced Afghan emir Dost Mohammed with Shah Shuja, a leader more sympathetic to British interests. Less than three years later, however, Shah Shuja was assassinated, and Dost Mohammed then reascended the throne after the British departed the country.<sup>56</sup> Chile deposed three Peruvian leaders during the War of the Pacific (1879–84) in search of a pliant interlocutor, only one of whom lasted even three years in office.<sup>57</sup> The United States was forced to intervene three times in five years in the Dominican Republic after its choices for president of that fractious country were removed by domestic opponents.<sup>58</sup> Although some installed autocrats prove more durable than in these examples, relying on an externally imposed dictator to secure the intervener's policy objectives is a high-risk strategy. Should an imposed autocrat be overthrown by a leader hostile to the intervener—such as the Shah of Iran's replacement by a radical Shi'ite clerical regime in 1979—not only would the intervener's policy objectives be placed at risk, but the intervener might even find itself in violent conflict with the target. A democratic regime might be less likely to do precisely what the intervener wants, but if successfully installed is likely to be stable, and any disputes between intervener and target should not escalate to a level where force is threatened or used.

A second problem with the view that democracies prefer to install autocrats is that it ignores numerous instances where democracies have left

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<sup>55</sup> Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George Downs, "Intervention and Democracy," *International Organization* 60, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 631, 632. See also James D. Morrow, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Randolph M. Siverson, and Alastair Smith, "Selection Institutions and War Aims," *Economics of Governance* 7, no. 1 (January 2006): 31–52.

<sup>56</sup> Britain's second foray into Afghanistan in the Second Afghan War (1878–80) yielded a very similar outcome. On these two interventions, see T. A. Heathcote, *The Afghan Wars, 1839–1919* (London: Osprey, 1980).

<sup>57</sup> Bruce Farcau, *The Ten Cents' War: Chile, Peru, and Bolivia in the War of the Pacific, 1879–1884* (Westport: Praeger, 2000), 168–93.

<sup>58</sup> Bruce J. Calder, *The Impact of Intervention: The Dominican Republic During the U.S. Occupation of 1916–1924* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), 5–19.

democratic institutions in their wake. The post-World War II cases of Germany, Austria, and Japan are the most obvious exceptions to the selectorate argument, but Grenada (1983), Panama (1990), Haiti (1994), Bosnia (1995), Kosovo (1999), Afghanistan (2001), and Iraq (2003) are also cases in which the United States and other Western countries have intervened and attempted to establish democratic systems. These cases highlight a third point: efforts to spread democracy can fall short for a variety of reasons, but such efforts do not provide evidence of intent to install or maintain autocracy so much as they show that democratization can be foiled by poor institutional design and implementation, infertile conditions for democracy, or a lack of will on the part of the interveners to persevere.

The final selectorate hypothesis stems from the model's assumption that democratic leaders strive to deliver public goods to benefit the democratic majority. When acting covertly, however, leaders are not bound by this requirement because the public remains unaware of intervention while it is taking place. Given this protection from the voting public, democratic leaders can essentially act in the interest of private actors. Overt interventions undertaken to salvage the investments of private corporations in foreign countries, for example, would be incompatible with the selectorate model of democracy, but democratic leaders could undertake such an intervention covertly.

*Selectorate Hypothesis 4: When democratic leaders intervene covertly, they are more likely to act on behalf of private actors than when they intervene openly.*

### Case Selection and Methodology

The remainder of the paper is devoted to testing these hypotheses—summarized in Table 1—in a detailed case study of covert foreign regime change in Chile. This case was chosen for two reasons. First, a wealth of information has become available about it in recent years owing to declassification of U.S. government documents. Because some of the propositions put forth require highly detailed information on decision-makers' (confidential) perceptions and opinions from the time period in question, a case with a large number of primary sources in the public domain is desirable. In 1999 and 2000, U.S. government agencies released nearly twenty-three thousand previously classified documents on Chile covering the years 1968 to 1991.<sup>59</sup> Included among these documents were seven hundred that the CIA's Directorate of Operations had previously declined to make public, "records of U.S.

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<sup>59</sup> See U.S. Department of State Office of the Spokesman, "Chile Declassification Project: Final Release," available at <http://foia.state.gov/Press/11-13-00ChilePR.asp>.

**TABLE 1** Summary of Hypotheses

Label	Hypothesis	Target selection, process, or outcome hypothesis?
NH1	Targets of covert intervention by democracies are not characterized by democratic norms and institutions	Target Selection
NH2	Targets of democratic intervention are not perceived to be democratic by policy makers in the intervening state	Target Selection
NH3	Covert interventions by democracies result in a democratic regime in the target	Outcome
NH4/CBH1	Democracies intervene covertly against other democracies because their domestic audience or veto players in society disapproves of targeting elected regimes	Process
SH1	Democracies target weaker states	Target Selection
SH2	Democracies intervene covertly if the likelihood of success is high or the probability that failure will be exposed is low	Target Selection
SH3	Democratic covert interventions result in non-democratic regimes in the target	Outcome
SH4	When intervening covertly, democratic leaders are more likely to provide private benefits than public goods	Process

covert operations between 1968 and 1975 to destabilize the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende and, after the violent 1973 coup, to bolster the military regime of Augusto Pinochet.<sup>60</sup> Thus, although the documentary record remains incomplete, sufficient evidence is available in the Chilean case to evaluate its consistency with theories of DP.

Second, among cases of covert intervention, Chile represents a most likely case for theories of DP. According to Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, "In a most-likely case, a single variable is at such an extreme value that its underlying causal mechanism should strongly determine a particular outcome. . . . If the predicted outcome does not occur, then the hypothesized causal mechanism underlying the extreme variable is strongly impugned."<sup>61</sup> As we demonstrate below, Chile was a democracy both in terms of the structure of its institutions and in the eyes of American policy makers. In other words, the theory strongly predicts in this case, for example, that liberal democratic norms of peaceful conflict resolution and nonintervention

<sup>60</sup> Press Release, "Chile: 16,000 Secret U.S. Documents Declassified," National Security Archive, available at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/news/20001113/>.

<sup>61</sup> Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 253. For an earlier formulation of this idea, which refers to these types of cases as "crucial cases," see Harry Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science," in *Handbook of Political Science*, vol. 7, *Strategies of Inquiry*, ed. Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975), 116–20.

should have led to trust and respect, and the absence of conflict. A peaceful outcome thus would not provide strong support for the norms theory, but a conflictual one would constitute relatively strong disconfirmation. This sort of test, writes John Gerring, “provides what is perhaps the strongest sort of evidence possible in a nonexperimental, single-case setting.”<sup>62</sup>

Proponents of norms theories might respond that their arguments are probabilistic and hence cannot be disconfirmed by a single case.<sup>63</sup> This is a complicated methodological issue that we cannot resolve here, although we would note with George and Bennett that “single case studies have changed entire research programs when they have impugned theories that failed to explain their most-likely cases.”<sup>64</sup> We do not view our findings on their own as falsifying norms theories; when viewed as part of a larger, accumulating body of evidence, however, our results cast further doubt on norms explanations for peace among democracies.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, although our evidence comes from a single dyad, we derive multiple testable implications from each theory to increase the explanatory leverage we can obtain from the data available in the case.<sup>66</sup> On a more practical level, the extensive research required to investigate our hypotheses and the limited amount of space available precludes analysis of multiple cases. However, we provide some suggestions for cases deserving of further research in the conclusion.

#### CHILE: ATTEMPTS TO OVERTHROW SALVADOR ALLENDE

The United States intervened in Chile in three stages of varying intensity from 1963 to 1973. In the first stage, the United States used money and propaganda to support Christian Democrat Party candidate Eduardo Frei in the 1964 presidential elections against his socialist adversary, Salvador

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<sup>62</sup> John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 115. Chile is not a most-likely case for the selectorate argument, however. Peace between states with large selectorates is most likely when they are roughly equal in power. A more appropriate research design, for example, might focus on crises between democratic great powers, like the analysis in Layne, “Kant or Cant.”

<sup>63</sup> Doyle, “Three Pillars of the Liberal Peace,” 465.

<sup>64</sup> George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, 221. See also Ronald Rogowski, “The Role of Theory and Anomaly in Social Scientific Research,” *American Political Science Review* 89, no. 2 (June 1995), 467–70.

<sup>65</sup> Layne, “Kant or Cant”; Rosato, “Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory”; and Reiter and Stam, *Democracies at War*. Also relevant is the accumulating evidence that democracies are no less likely to target—or kill large numbers of—civilians in war, which is incompatible with liberal and democratic values. See Alexander B. Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); and Benjamin Valentino, Paul Huth, and Sarah Croco, “Covenants without the Sword: International Law and the Protection of Civilians in Time of War,” *World Politics* 58, no. 3 (April 2006): 339–77.

<sup>66</sup> Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

Allende. Frei won in 1964, but presidents in Chile are limited to one six-year term, and Allende entered the race again in 1970. Allende received the largest number of votes in the September election but did not obtain a majority, which required the Chilean Congress to choose between the top two vote-getters. There was a strong norm in Chile that Congress should select the winner of the popular vote.

The second stage of U.S. intervention used various techniques to try to delay or block Allende's formal election by Congress, including both nonviolent (known as Track I) and violent (Track II) means. On 15 September, ten days after Allende won a plurality of the presidential vote, President Richard Nixon ordered the CIA to "prevent Allende from coming to power or to unseat him."<sup>67</sup> For the next six weeks, CIA operatives worked frantically to induce Chile's politicians and political parties to defeat Allende in the congressional vote. This enterprise was doomed from the start because of Chileans' fidelity to democratic procedures (described below), and few put much stock in it. David Atlee Phillips, head of the Chilean Task Force, later recalled: "Anyone who had lived in Chile, as I had, and knew Chileans, knew that you might get away with bribing one Chilean Senator, but two? Never. And three? Not a chance. . . . They would blow the whistle. They were democrats and had been for a very long time."<sup>68</sup>

Because of the low probability of a nonviolent solution, the focus of U.S. efforts against Allende shifted to the military sphere. On orders from National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, CIA headquarters cabled the Santiago Station on 7 October 1970: "[Excised] instructs you to contact the military and let them know USG [United States Government] wants a military solution, and that we will support them now and later."<sup>69</sup> Although Kissinger shut down one plot by retired General Roberto Viaux, another plot took shape involving Viaux and several other officers to set off a coup by assassinating the Army Chief of Staff General René Schneider. The CIA provided the plotters with several machine guns, but these weapons were not used in the attempt on Schneider's life. The chief of staff was killed, but rather than sparking a coup as intended, the Chilean military stayed out of politics, and Allende was confirmed as scheduled on 24 October.

Kissinger subsequently claimed that he terminated Track II when he shut off Viaux's original plot on 15 October. Declassified documents and the testimony of others contradict this claim. According to Tom Karamessines, chief of covert operations at the time, "Track Two never really ended."<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> William V. Broe, "Genesis of Project FUBELT," 16 September 1970, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III. All documents from the CIA Chile Declassification Project are available at <http://foia.state.gov/SearchColls/CIA.asp>.

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes*, 310.

<sup>69</sup> CIA, cable from CIA Headquarters to Santiago Station, 7 October 1970, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III.

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes*, 315.

Notes from Kissinger's meeting with Karamessines on 15 October confirm this view, as Kissinger told the agency to "continue keeping the pressure on every Allende weak spot in sight—now, after the 24th of October, after 5 November, and into the future until such time as new marching orders are given."<sup>71</sup> These orders were communicated to the CIA's Santiago Station the next day: "It is firm and continuing policy that Allende be overthrown by a coup. It would be much preferable to have this transpire prior to 24 October but efforts in this regard will continue vigorously beyond this date."<sup>72</sup>

The goal of overthrowing Allende did not change, but merely entered a new, third phase after the Chilean Congress confirmed Allende's election victory. At a meeting of President Nixon and his top advisors on 6 November, a few days after Allende was inaugurated, there was a consensus that, as the Secretaries of State and Defense each put it, the United States had "to bring him [Allende] down."<sup>73</sup> One year later, the chief of station in Santiago cabled headquarters that "the . . . end objective" of U.S. policy in Chile was "a military solution to the Chilean problem. . . . we conceive our [excised] mission as one in which we work consciously and deliberately in the direction of a coup."<sup>74</sup> The Nixon administration cut off all bilateral U.S. economic assistance to Chile and blocked aid to the country from international institutions like the International Development Bank and the World Bank while refusing to reschedule Chile's foreign debt. The CIA also gave large sums of money to Chilean opposition parties and media outlets.<sup>75</sup> On 11 September 1973, Allende was overthrown by General Augusto Pinochet; Allende died in midst of the coup. The CIA did not participate in the coup itself: it had already been determined that the Chilean military did not need U.S. assistance and that revelation of U.S. involvement would not be worth the price.<sup>76</sup>

As will become clear below, the evidence contradicts norms and checks and balances arguments for DP. The Chilean government that the United States attempted to depose was perceived by American policy makers as democratic, the regime that took power in the coup's aftermath was dictatorial, and there was no concern for domestic restraints when choosing to act covertly. The selectorate model fares better, but the evidence is still mixed. On the plus side of the ledger, Chile was much weaker than the

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<sup>71</sup> CIA, memorandum of conversation, 15 October 1970, in Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*. See also Schmitz, *United States and Right-Wing Dictatorships*, 96.

<sup>72</sup> CIA, cable from CIA Headquarters to Santiago Station, 16 October 1970, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III.

<sup>73</sup> The White House, memorandum of conversation, "NSC Meeting-Chile (NSSM 97)," 6 November 1970, in Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*.

<sup>74</sup> Chief, Santiago Station cable to Chief, Western Hemisphere Division, CIA, 12 November 1971, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III.

<sup>75</sup> Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*, 82–94.

<sup>76</sup> Memorandum for the record, "Minutes on the Current Chilean Situation at Department of State, 1630–1830, 17 October 1972," 18 October 1972, in Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*.

United States, and the regime that replaced Allende was much more repressive. However, the covert nature of the intervention did not lead U.S. policy makers to act at the behest of private interests. Although the plight of American companies in Chile helped instigate U.S. involvement, the main reasons articulated by policy makers for intervening were the threat of communism and Soviet influence in Latin America, and the blow to American credibility that would result from tolerating Allende's regime. Finally, American leaders were pessimistic that their interventions would succeed and pessimistic that failed efforts could be kept secret.

We discuss the norms and checks and balances hypotheses (NH4 and CBH1) regarding the domestic reasons for intervening covertly together since they make the same basic prediction. We also discuss the two hypotheses regarding the outcome of intervention (NH3 and SH3) together because one is simply the opposite of the other.

### Chile: Democracy or Autocracy?

The first two hypotheses from the norms perspective contend that Chile was not a democracy, and that U.S. policy makers did not perceive the country to be democratic. These arguments as applied to Chile, however, are belied by the facts.

*Chilean democracy.* During the time leading up to the coup on 11 September 1973, Chile was categorized as a democratic state by numerous measures. The Polity IV Project ranks countries' political institutions along several dimensions, including competitiveness of political participation, openness and competitiveness of executive recruitment, and institutional constraints on executive power. According to this 21-point (−10 to +10) index, Chile scored +6 from 1965 until the coup in 1973. States that score +6 or above on the Polity index are typically regarded as consolidated democracies.<sup>77</sup> Chile also scored well on a second measure of democratic institutions, Tatu Vanhanen's Polyarchy variable. Vanhanen argues for a two-dimensional conception of democracy consisting of the level of competitiveness in the political system (measured by the percentage of votes cast for parties other than the largest party) and the level of participation (operationalized as the percentage of the population that voted).<sup>78</sup> A state's Polyarchy score is the product of these two figures (divided by one hundred). According to this conception of democracy, Chile was actually more

<sup>77</sup> Monty G. Marshall and Keith Jagers, "Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800–2007," available at <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm>. Chile's Polity score remained the same under Allende as it was under Eduardo Frei, the previous president favored by the United States.

<sup>78</sup> Tatu Vanhanen, "A New Dataset for Measuring Democracy, 1810–1998," *Journal of Peace Research* 37, no. 2 (March 2000): 253.

democratic than the United States in 1972, scoring 19.78 to the U.S.'s 14.66.<sup>79</sup> Finally, Freedom House ranks countries' observance of political rights (which "enable people to participate freely in the political process") and civil rights (which "allow for the freedoms of expression and belief") on a scale of one (best) to seven (worst). In 1972, the year that Freedom House first published its rankings, Chile received scores of one for political rights and two for civil rights (the same as the well-established democracies France and Italy), earning an overall designation as a "free" country.<sup>80</sup>

Historians and political scientists—including some supporters of DP arguments—also agree that Chile was a democratic country in the 1960s and early 1970s. Paul Sigmund, for example, emphasizes that Chile "had a long history of democracy and a tradition of social reform going back to the 1920s, when it first adopted social security programs and a labor code."<sup>81</sup> David Forsythe, who first proposed that the covert overthrow of elected governments by democracies could be consistent with DP, acknowledges that Allende was elected in 1970 by a "reasonably free and fair vote" and "thus became a democratically elected socialist President in a non-socialist political economy."<sup>82</sup> David Kinsella, otherwise an ardent defender of DP, similarly recognizes that "U.S. intervention in a democratic Chile in 1973 is beyond dispute."<sup>83</sup> The unavoidable conclusion of this evidence is that Chile—contrary to NH1—was a democracy according to standard political science definitions and in the judgment of scholars when the United States sought to overthrow the government of Salvador Allende.

The process by which Allende was elected in Congress confirms the strength of both democratic norms and institutions in Chile. As noted above, Allende received only a plurality of the popular vote (36.6 percent), and thus it fell to Congress to choose between the two leading candidates. In such circumstances, the Congress always ratified the public's choice by electing the candidate who received the largest share of the popular vote.<sup>84</sup> Radomiro Tomic, the candidate of the Christian Democrats, the party of outgoing President Eduardo Frei, quickly recognized Allende as president-elect

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<sup>79</sup> Tatu Vanhanen, "Polyarchy Dataset," version 2.0, available at <http://www.prio.no/CSCW/Datasets/Governance/Vanhanens-index-of-democracy>. Vanhanen establishes thresholds of 30 percent for competition and 10 percent for participation to be considered a democracy. Chile first surpassed the competition threshold in the late nineteenth century, but only exceeded both starting in 1952. Chile's combined score exceeded that of the United States for the first time in 1970.

<sup>80</sup> Quotes are from *Freedom in the World, 2009*, and data are from *Freedom in the World Comparative and Historical Data*, both available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=15>.

<sup>81</sup> Paul E. Sigmund, *The United States and Democracy in Chile* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 15. See also Paul E. Sigmund, *The Overthrow of Allende and the Politics of Chile, 1964–1976* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977), 14–22.

<sup>82</sup> Forsythe, "Democracy, War, and Covert Action," 389.

<sup>83</sup> Kinsella, "No Rest for the Democratic Peace," 455.

<sup>84</sup> Schmitz, *United States and Right-Wing Dictatorships*, 95.

based on his vote share, and the party decided to support Allende's election in Congress.<sup>85</sup> The second-leading vote-getter, former President Jorge Alessandri, planned at first to mount a challenge to Allende, but changed his mind after the Christian Democrats' decision to back Allende. The Christian Democrats also rejected an overture from Alessandri that would have resulted in new elections (and a probable Christian Democratic victory) because it would in effect disenfranchise socialist voters.<sup>86</sup> "This would amount to telling 35 percent of the electorate that you may participate in elections, but you cannot win," remarked Senator Benjamin Prado, president of the Christian Democrats. "You can come in second or third, but not first."<sup>87</sup> When Congress met on 24 October 1970, Allende received 153 votes out of 195 cast, 74 of which came from the Christian Democrats.<sup>88</sup> The Chilean system thus exemplified "contingent consent," one of the hallmark norms of democracy whereby losing parties agree to leave office and form a loyal opposition because the winners agree to respect their rights and vacate office should they be defeated.<sup>89</sup>

*u.s. perceptions of Chilean democracy.* In confirmation of Chile's democratic status, and in contradiction to NH2, several documents circulating within the U.S. government at the time suggest that American policy makers perceived Chile to be a long-standing democracy. In January 1964, anticipating a split election (like that which would occur in 1970), J. C. King, chief of the Western Hemisphere Division of the CIA, sent a memorandum to Director of Central Intelligence John McCone regarding the possibility of persuading the Chilean Congress to vote for the runner-up candidate instead of Allende if the socialist senator were to win the popular vote. In his memo, King acknowledged that this would be difficult because of Chile's democratic tradition: "It is unlikely that many parliamentarians will conclude that their reelection will be best assured by going against the will of the people by flouting Chile's proud democratic spirit and by assuming the responsibility for the civil unrest that would follow such a decision."<sup>90</sup>

<sup>85</sup> In fact, the day after the election, Tomic visited Allende and said, "I have come to greet the President-elect of Chile, my grand old friend, Salvador Allende." Quoted in Sigmund, *Overthrow of Allende*, 110.

<sup>86</sup> Alessandri's scheme was to persuade the Christian Democrats to vote for him; after winning, he would then resign, which would result in a new election in which Frei (constitutionally barred from succeeding himself) would be permitted to run. This U.S.-backed initiative (labeled the "Rube Goldberg" scenario by Henry Kissinger) failed largely because Frei refused to break with tradition and oppose Allende's election. Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 179; and Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), 672.

<sup>87</sup> Quoted in Sigmund, *Overthrow of Allende*, 118.

<sup>88</sup> Seven voters abstained, while thirty-five cast ballots for Alessandri. Richard Helms (CIA), briefing for the National Security Council, Chile, 6 November 1970, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III.

<sup>89</sup> Dixon, "Democracy and the Peaceful Settlement of International Conflict."

<sup>90</sup> Chief of the Western Hemisphere Division J. C. King, memorandum to Director of Central Intelligence McCone, 3 January 1964, *FRUS*, 1964-68, vol. 31, 245.

Six years later, shortly after Allende's victory was confirmed by the Chilean Congress, Henry Kissinger wrote a memorandum on the Chilean situation to President Nixon. In that memo, Kissinger acknowledged Chile's democratic status: "Allende was elected legally. . . . He has legitimacy in the eyes of the Chileans and most of the world; there is nothing we can do to deny him that legitimacy or claim that he does not have it."<sup>91</sup> Even at this high level of decision making, key political figures acknowledged that pursuing their plans to intervene would undermine a legitimate democracy. In the same memorandum, Kissinger went on to explain to Nixon the dilemma the United States would face by intervening in the Chilean democratic process:

We are strongly on record in support of self-determination and respect for free election; you are firmly on record for non-intervention in the internal affairs of this hemisphere and of accepting nations "as they are." It would therefore be very costly for us to act in ways that appear to violate those principles, and Latin Americans and others in the world will view our policy as a test of the credibility of our rhetoric.<sup>92</sup>

Later that month the CIA Chilean task force reported on the progress of their propaganda campaign to promote concern for Chile's future under Allende's rule among the "Chilean political equation," a shorthand term for former President Frei, the Chilean political elite, and the Chilean military. In this memo, the task force reported that each of these Chilean political figures "hastened to rationalize its acceptance of an Allende presidency" because of "the built-in checks and balances of Chile's demonstrated reverence for democracy and constitutionality, sweetened by Allende's promise to honor these traditions."<sup>93</sup> Frei, upon whom any gambit to block Allende's ascension to office depended, rebuffed CIA blandishments to appoint an all-military cabinet, resign, and leave the country in the military's hands.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, with regard to the Chilean military, "anti-Allende currents did exist in the military and the Carabineros [riflemen], but were immobilized by . . . the

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<sup>91</sup> Kissinger, memorandum to President Nixon, "NSC Meeting, November 6—Chile," 5 November 1970, National Security Archive website, available at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB110/index.htm>.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. These internal comments by Kissinger highlight the perils of relying on memoirs written after-the-fact for evidence of participants' earlier views. Kissinger's acknowledgement of Allende's democratic legitimacy in these documents, for example, contradicts his later comments that Allende's rule was illegitimate because he received only a plurality of the votes in the 1970 election. Kissinger, *White House Years*, 654, 673; and Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982), 374–75. Chile's proportional representation system—much like similar systems in many other democracies—frequently resulted in the winning candidate receiving less than 50 percent of the popular vote, such as the election of Jorge Alessandri in 1958.

<sup>93</sup> "Report on CIA Chilean Task Force Activities, 15 September to 3 November 1970," 16 November 1970, National Security Archive website, available at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/nsaebb8i.htm>.

<sup>94</sup> Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*, 13.

tradition of military respect for the Constitution” as well as “the public and private stance of General Schneider, Commander in Chief of the Army, who advocated strict adherence to the Constitution.”<sup>95</sup>

After the attempts to keep Allende from being confirmed failed and the socialist leader took office, U.S. perceptions of Chilean democracy did not change much. The CIA Office of National Estimates analyzed the political situation in Chile in April 1972 and concluded that despite rising tensions over the eighteen months since Allende assumed office, “the Chilean tradition of accommodative politics has survived. . . . The strength and resiliency of the Chilean political system is seen in the willingness of most of the chief political actors to turn to conciliation and compromise to defuse potentially explosive situations, rather than let the advocates of political violence carry the day.” The report continued, “The willingness of seemingly implacable political foes to engage in behind-the-scenes bargaining is a crucial element in preserving the essentially democratic character of the existing Chilean system.” The report also noted how most of Chile’s leading political figures had been socialized to norms of “conciliation and compromise” by serving in the Chilean Senate. The analysis also rated the likelihood of a direct military seizure of power as low because military officers, “Like most Chileans . . . generally take great pride in the national heritage of respect for legality and constitutional order.”<sup>96</sup>

Based on these documents, there is little doubt that American policy makers, in contradiction to NH2, perceived Chile to be a democracy.<sup>97</sup> Yet this perception did not translate into restrained behavior or trust and respect: “The issue of respect for the democratic process,” notes Paul Sigmund, “does not seem to have been considered by either Nixon or Kissinger.”<sup>98</sup> Indeed, Allende’s democratic road to socialism was thought to be more dangerous than Castro’s revolutionary route because it occurred in a democracy. According to a former Kissinger aide, “Henry saw Allende as being a far more dangerous threat than Castro. If Latin America ever became unraveled, it would never happen with a Castro. Allende was a living example of democratic

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> CIA Office of National Estimates, “Chile: Conciliation, Confrontation, or Coup?” 4 April 1972, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III.

<sup>97</sup> Even Kissinger in his memoirs inadvertently attests to Chile’s democratic nature. Describing the reaction to an attempted coup in Santiago in June 1973, Kissinger remarks: “So strong was the constitutional tradition in Chile that this violent shock brought disparate forces to the defense of the Allende government.” Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 400. For similar sentiments expressed by the former Director of the CIA, see Richard Helms, *A Look over My Shoulder: A Life in the Central Intelligence Agency* (New York: Random House, 2003), 396.

<sup>98</sup> Sigmund, *United States and Democracy in Chile*, 55. That both Nixon and Kissinger were foreign policy realists helps explain this disdain, but many U.S. presidents, realists and liberals alike, have been willing to meddle in the affairs of other democracies. Few DP theories discuss the possibility that realists might come to power in democracies. For one exception, see Owen, *Liberal Peace, Liberal War*.

social reform in Latin America.”<sup>99</sup> Kissinger feared that the Chilean model could be replicated elsewhere, particularly in Western Europe.

### Outcomes: Extinguishing Democracy

Far from helping Chile to become a stronger democracy, the coup against Allende was followed by large-scale repression by the U.S.-backed military junta and sixteen years of military dictatorship. To express numerically the negative effect Pinochet’s takeover had on democracy, Chile went from a Polity score of +6 during Allende’s administration to -7 under Pinochet. Chile’s Polychy score plummeted from 19.78 to 0, and the country’s Freedom House rankings dropped to 7 (political rights) and 5 (civil rights), whereas under Allende Chile had scored 1 and 2 on these respective dimensions. Given the low likelihood that Track I would yield results, Nixon and Kissinger quickly turned to the military option in the fall of 1970, hoping to instigate a coup that would oust Allende and result in military dictatorship. Documents cited above show clearly that the administration sought a military solution.<sup>100</sup> This continued to be the case in early 1973, when CIA headquarters exhorted Santiago station to “induce as much of the military as possible, if not all, to take over and displace the Allende govt.”<sup>101</sup>

The U.S. government clearly understood that its advocacy of a military coup meant the end of democracy in Chile. As the CIA reported shortly after Pinochet’s putsch, “Severe repression is planned. . . . There is no indication whatever that the military plans any early relinquishment of full political power in Chile.”<sup>102</sup> Yet the Nixon administration rushed to embrace the military junta, writing in a cable two days after the coup: “The USG wishes to make clear its desire to cooperate with the military Junta and to assist

<sup>99</sup> Quoted in Grow, *U.S. Presidents and Latin American Interventions*, 108.

<sup>100</sup> CIA, cable from CIA Headquarters to Santiago Station, 7 October 1970; and CIA, cable from CIA Headquarters to Santiago Station, 16 October 1970, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III.

<sup>101</sup> Quoted in Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 190.

<sup>102</sup> CIA, cable from Santiago Station to CIA Headquarters, 20 September 1973, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche I. See also Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*, 154. A few months after the coup, the CIA noted Pinochet’s estimate that civilian rule would probably not return to Chile for “at least five years,” and Pinochet himself later declared that there “will be no elections in Chile during my lifetime nor in the lifetime of my successor.” CIA, memorandum, “Aspects of the Situation in Chile,” 22 March 1974, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche I; and Schmitz, *United States and Right-Wing Dictatorships*, 106. Policy makers also had evidence that a coup in 1970 would be bloody. As Santiago Station reported on 10 October, in the event of a coup, “Carnage could be considerable and prolonged, i.e. civil war.” Santiago Station, cable to CIA Headquarters, 10 October 1970, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III. In the 1973 coup 1,500 civilians died in the first four weeks of military rule, and 13,500 were detained. Santiago Station, cable to CIA Headquarters, 27 October 1973, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche I. For Kissinger, this collateral damage was acceptable: “I agree that we should not knock down stories that later prove to be true, nor should we be in the position of defending what they’re doing in Santiago. But I think we should understand our policy—that however unpleasant they act, the government is better for us than Allende was.” Department of State, “Secretary’s Staff Meeting, 1 October 1973,” 4 October 1973, National Security Archive website, available at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB110/index.htm>.

in any appropriate way.”<sup>103</sup> Almost immediately, the United States resumed economic and military aid to Chile that had been interrupted under Allende, extending agricultural credits and food aid, allowing lucrative loans to pass through international lending institutions, and selling the military regime one hundred million dollars worth of American weaponry. Kissinger’s State Department then ended all covert financial support to Chile’s political parties, while the CIA helped establish the Directorate of National Intelligence, the new regime’s secret police. The United States also used both overt and covert means to defend Pinochet against charges of human rights abuses.<sup>104</sup> All of this evidence supports the view that the U.S. government cared far more about securing a pliable (if dictatorial) regime in Santiago (SH3) than promoting democracy (NH3).

### Why Was Intervention in Chile Covert?

*International, not domestic, constraints.* According to NH4 and CBH1, intervention against other democracies is undertaken covertly because policy makers understand that public opinion would oppose more explicit action. If this proposition were true, we should expect key government documents to reflect democratic elites’ fear of domestic public disapproval or opposition by other governmental actors when making their decisions regarding intervention in Chile. The documents, in fact, show no such thing; instead, they are filled with discussions of the negative repercussions for the U.S.’s reputation in Latin America and the wider world of openly working to overthrow Allende.

An assessment prepared in early September 1970 of the possibility that Allende could be removed by political action, for example, noted that the United States was contemplating “political action designed to thwart the victory of a legally elected candidate” and cautioned that “if the USG’s role in such an activity were exposed, it could seriously damage US prestige and credibility both in Chile and elsewhere in the hemisphere.”<sup>105</sup> A memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon in November referenced a variety of concerns motivating the United States to act covertly, none of which include domestic public opinion:

What all of this boils down to is a fundamental dilemma and issue . . . Do we wait and try to protect our interests in the context of dealing with

<sup>103</sup> Department of State, cable to U.S. Embassy Santiago, “USG Attitude Toward Junta,” 13 September 1973, National Security Archive website, available at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB212/index.htm>.

<sup>104</sup> Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*, 203–17.

<sup>105</sup> CIA, memorandum, “Chile/Prospects for Political Action to Deny Salvador Allende the Presidency,” 8 September 1970, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III.

Allende because . . . we do not want to risk turning nationalism against us and damaging our image, credibility, and position in the world . . . Do we decide to do something to prevent him from consolidating himself . . . AND thereby risk: . . . damaging our credibility in the eyes of the rest of the world as interventionist . . . turning nationalism and latent fear of US domination in the rest of Latin America into violent and intense opposition to us.<sup>106</sup>

A memo prepared at about the same time by the State Department's Bureau of Inter-American Affairs echoed many of these concerns. Its authors cautioned that if the administration were to contravene its official policy of "respect for the outcome of democratic elections," the consequences could be to

reduce our credibility throughout the world . . . increase nationalism directed against us . . . be used by the Allende Government to consolidate its position with the Chilean people and to gain influence in the rest of the hemisphere . . . and move the Allende Government to seek even closer relations with the USSR than it might have initially contemplated.<sup>107</sup>

Many officials in the U.S. government understood that moving forcefully against Chile could backfire, serving "Allende's purpose of rallying the Chilean people around him in the face of the 'foreign devil.'"<sup>108</sup> An October 1970 CIA memo entitled "The Coup That Failed" was dedicated to assessing the possible negative consequences in Chile of an unsuccessful coup by the leading candidate at that time, retired General Roberto Viaux. The document concluded that an unsuccessful coup would greatly strengthen Allende's hold on power. Not only would "U.S. prestige in Chile, Latin America, and the free world . . . be diminished," but the "Communist power-base would increase significantly" as "Allende would attempt to consolidate his position within the military" and "exploit this situation by pressuring the political opposition . . . to support his nationalization program."<sup>109</sup>

Moreover, according to a secret annex to National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) 97, the prospects for success of any potential intervention were highly uncertain, and failure could have negative consequences: "There is almost no way to evaluate the likelihood that such an attempt would be successful even if it were made. An unsuccessful attempt, involving as it probably would revelation of U.S. participation, would have grave consequences for our relations with Chile, in the hemisphere, in the United States

<sup>106</sup> Kissinger, memorandum to Nixon, "NSC Meeting, 6 November—Chile."

<sup>107</sup> Quoted in Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*, 81.

<sup>108</sup> Briefing paper for Kissinger, quoted in Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*, 81.

<sup>109</sup> CIA, memorandum, 15 October 1970, reproduced in Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*.

and elsewhere in the world.”<sup>110</sup> Although this passage refers to domestic consequences of failure and revelation of U.S. involvement, elsewhere NSSM 97 notes that opinion in the United States at the time was more of a spur to intervene than a restraint:

To date, coast to coast editorial comment has generally supported the manner in which the United States has handled developments in Chile. As the actions of the Allende government become more overtly hostile to U.S. interests, however, we may expect adverse reaction by some sectors of the U.S. public, press, and Congress to the “establishment of another communist government in the hemisphere,” with consequent pressures on U.S. policy.<sup>111</sup>

Indeed, evidence indicates that Nixon feared that “losing Chile” might have negative repercussions for his reelection campaign in 1972 because Democrats could (rightly) charge that “his administration had taken no action to prevent Allende’s election, despite recommendations from [U.S. Ambassador to Chile Edward] Korry and the CIA that covert anti-Allende blocking efforts should be initiated.”<sup>112</sup>

In deciding whether to pursue intervention against Allende, therefore, it is apparent that domestic public opinion did not act as a restraint on U.S. decision makers causing them to use covert as opposed to overt methods. This evidence does not square with Russett’s explanation that democratic norms and institutions drove what otherwise would have been overt interventions into the covert realm.<sup>113</sup> In fact, it seems it was not normative pressure at all, but concern for how the global audience would perceive U.S. intervention in Chile that caused American leaders to act covertly.<sup>114</sup> On the domestic front, if anything leaders worried that they would face public pressure to act openly to prevent a communist regime from emerging in the Western Hemisphere. The evidence thus does not support NH4 or CBH1.

<sup>110</sup> Quoted in Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*, 9. The revised version of NSSM 97 is dated 3 November 1970, but the annex was probably written for the first draft of the document in August.

<sup>111</sup> CIA, “Options paper for NSC-Chile (NSSM 97),” 3 November 1970, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III.

<sup>112</sup> Grow, *U.S. Presidents and Latin American Interventions*, 110. The fact that Nixon was worried about the effect of the Chile situation on his prospects for re-election provides some support for the selectorate argument. Presumably Nixon was aware of the problems that an Allende regime might cause for his own tenure in office before Allende was elected. However, he failed to do anything significant to block a potential Allende victory. Nixon’s inaction thus cuts against the selectorate thesis.

<sup>113</sup> Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace*, 124.

<sup>114</sup> Another possible explanation for acting covertly in Chile is that Nixon and Kissinger understood that public opinion in the United States was permissive in the sense that it did not closely monitor foreign policy. As long as the administration’s actions were low cost and low profile, the public was willing to defer to the president’s judgment. Intervening openly with U.S. troops, however, especially against an elected leader, would attract a lot of attention and would be much more costly, thereby provoking public disapproval. We did not find any evidence for this conjecture.

## Selectorate Hypotheses and Chile

It is clear that the United States picked on a much weaker state in Chile and that the regime that replaced Allende's was a non-democratic military dictatorship. Indeed, from the moment Allende was elected, the United States put most of its efforts into fomenting a military coup, and over the course of the years after Allende came to power, the United States gradually lost faith in the ability of the Chilean political parties to displace the socialists and communists.<sup>115</sup> The Nixon administration's rush to recognize and provide aid to the military junta also makes clear that Washington had no problem with an autocratic government in Chile.

*Likelihood of success versus exposure.* Nixon and Kissinger proceeded with plans in the autumn of 1970 to prevent Allende from succeeding to office or—failing that—to overthrow him even in the face of strong evidence that such plots would not only fail, but also become public knowledge. The CIA, for example, assessed that Track I (nonviolent) methods stood little chance of denying Allende the presidency. As a CIA report put it in early September, "Political action to deny Allende the presidency in the congressional run-off is a very dim prospect at this particular time."<sup>116</sup> Another CIA cable from about the same time similarly judged the political route as unlikely to succeed: "It is reasonably clear, in exploring avenues to prevent an Allende government from exercising power, that (a) the political/constitutional route in any form is a nonstarter and (b) the only prospect with any chance of success whatsoever is a military golpe either before or immediately after Allende's assumption of power."<sup>117</sup> Most officials, however, rated the probability that Allende's ascension could be blocked by military means as low. Ambassador Korry, for example, cabled from Santiago on 12 September that the "Chilean military will not repeat not move to prevent Allende's ascension, barring unlikely situation of national chaos and widespread violence."<sup>118</sup> Korry followed up this bleak assessment several weeks later by invoking the failed attempt to remove Castro in 1961: "I think any attempt on our part actively to encourage a coup could lead us to a Bay of Pigs failure . . . an unrelieved disaster for the U.S. and for the President."<sup>119</sup> Kissinger's top aide for Latin America, Viron Vaky, echoed Korry's pessimism in a cable

<sup>115</sup> This disenchantment, particularly with the Christian Democrats, is visible in CIA, memorandum, 30 June 1973, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III. Also evident is the increasing realization that the Christian Democrats' political program was not that different from Allende's.

<sup>116</sup> CIA, memorandum, 8 September 1970, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III. See also "Report on CIA Chilean Task Force Activities, 15 September to 3 November 1970."

<sup>117</sup> CIA, cable to Santiago Station, 9 September 1970, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III. *Golpe* translates as "coup."

<sup>118</sup> Cable, U.S. Embassy, Santiago, to Department of State, "Ambassador's Response to Request for Analysis of Military Option in Present Chilean Situation," 12 September 1970, reproduced in Kombluh, *Pinochet File*.

<sup>119</sup> Cable, Korry to Kissinger, 8 October 1970, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III.

to his boss two days later: "We have no capability to motivate or instigate a coup . . . any covert effort to stimulate a military takeover is a nonstarter."<sup>120</sup> On 10 October, the CIA reported to another Kissinger aide, Alexander Haig, that "the situation looked dimmer now than at any time before" and that the Agency "had received pessimistic reactions from all" the military officers it had approached. The CIA's Santiago Station also "stressed bleakness of military picture and improbability of any af [sic] forces intervention originating with or condoned by high command."<sup>121</sup>

By early October, the only option available to the CIA was an ill-conceived plot led by a former Chilean military officer, Roberto Viaux, to touch off a coup by kidnapping or killing Chief of Staff René Schneider. As noted above, the authors of NSSM 97 had opined in mid-August 1970 that an "unsuccessful attempt" to topple Allende would probably reveal American participation.<sup>122</sup> Ambassador Korry had similarly warned in late September that trying to provoke a coup ran a serious risk of disaster: "Aside from the merits of a coup and its implications for the U.S., I am convinced we cannot provoke one and that we should not run any risk simply to have another Bay of Pigs."<sup>123</sup> Santiago Station judged the "Viaux solution" to be very risky and possibly quite bloody and added that "U.S. involvement will clearly be impossible" to hide.<sup>124</sup> In Washington, Tom Karamessines and Henry Kissinger rated Viaux's chances of success at one in twenty.<sup>125</sup> Kissinger decided to postpone this particular approach, but "instructed Mr. Karamessines to preserve Agency assets in Chile, working clandestinely and securely to maintain the capability for Agency operations against Allende in the future."<sup>126</sup> Kissinger came away from this meeting highly dispirited regarding the likelihood that Allende could be kept out of power: As he wrote to Nixon a few days later, "Our capacity to engineer Allende's overthrow quickly has been demonstrated to be sharply limited."<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Quoted in Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*, 11.

<sup>121</sup> William V. Broe, memorandum, 10 October 1970; and Santiago Station cable to CIA Headquarters, 13 October 1970, both in CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III. For similar views expressed by other high-ranking CIA officials, see United States Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, *Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders* (New York: Norton, 1976), 233.

<sup>122</sup> Quoted in Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*, 9.

<sup>123</sup> Korry, cable to Alexis Johnson and Henry Kissinger, 25 September 1970, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III.

<sup>124</sup> Santiago Station, cable to CIA Headquarters, 10 October 1970, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III.

<sup>125</sup> Memorandum of conversation between Dr. Kissinger, Mr. Karamessines, and Gen. Haig, 15 October 1970, National Security Archive website, available at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/nsaebb8.htm>.

<sup>126</sup> Kissinger also wished to preserve the option to reactivate Viaux in the future when prospects for success brightened. *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> Quoted in Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*, 27.

A few days later, however, the CIA sent machine guns and ammunition to another set of plotters—which also included Viaux—led by General Camilo Valenzuela, chief of the Santiago garrison. The CIA's Santiago Station was more hopeful about this scheme, the goal of which was also to eliminate Schneider, but most of the CIA's contacts in the Chilean military were “not at all sanguine re chances of preventing Allende from taking office.”<sup>128</sup> After two bungled attempts to kidnap Schneider, Santiago Station concluded that because “Valenzuela's group is apparently having considerable difficulty executing even the first step of its coup plan, the prospect for a coup succeeding or even occurring before 24 October now appears remote.”<sup>129</sup> Despite this pessimism, CIA Headquarters at the same time assured Valenzuela of U.S. support “now or in the future” and continued pushing for a coup despite the awareness that the U.S.'s position had become widely known in Chile.<sup>130</sup> The plotters did eventually kill Schneider, but failed to spark a coup, and Allende was confirmed by Congress. The evidence thus indicates that although Kissinger defused one plot that was particularly unlikely to succeed, the overall effort to provoke a coup against Allende was characterized by the view that it was not likely to succeed and U.S. involvement would probably be revealed.

*Private versus public goods?* The fourth selectorate hypothesis leads us to expect that democratic leaders are able to provide private goods when they act covertly because their actions are shielded from public view and accountability. In fact, however, the documents show what appears to be a genuine concern for U.S. security in planning actions in Chile. NSSM 97, for example, discussed the security threat U.S. policy makers perceived from a possible communist takeover in Chile; officials were concerned that a “Marxist-Allende government in power would represent a potential danger to Western Hemisphere security, to the extent that it develops military ties with Communist powers, and is actively hostile to inter-American security organizations. Full realization of these potentials could threaten U.S. security interests specifically.”<sup>131</sup> Indeed, Kissinger seemed fully convinced that Allende's ascension to power spelled impending doom for the United States

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<sup>128</sup> Santiago Station, cable to CIA Headquarters, 19 October 1970, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III. For the station's optimism, see CIA Headquarters cable to Santiago Station, 18 October 1970; CIA, memorandum, “Special Situation Report,” 19 October 1970; and CIA, memorandum, “Track II,” 20 October 1970, all in CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III. Pessimism by military contacts is conveyed in Santiago Station cable to CIA Headquarters, 19 October 1970. The station also noted that the Chilean public “would overwhelmingly reject military intervention.” Santiago Station, cable to CIA Headquarters, 20 October 1970. Both documents are in CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III.

<sup>129</sup> CIA, memorandum, “Track II,” 22 October 1970, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III.

<sup>130</sup> Quote is from *ibid.* For evidence that Washington's support for a coup was widely known, see CIA Headquarters, cable to Santiago Station, 20 October 1970; and Santiago Station, cable to CIA Headquarters, 20 October 1970, both in CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III.

<sup>131</sup> “Options paper for NSC-Chile (NSSM 97).”

when he told President Nixon in November 1970 that “the election of Allende as President of Chile poses for us one of the most serious challenges ever faced in this hemisphere . . . for what happens in Chile over the next six to twelve months will have ramifications that will go far beyond just US-Chilean relations.”<sup>132</sup> These documents point to a strong preoccupation with the security threat posed to the United States if Allende was to take office.

Objectively, however, the threat to U.S. interests posed by Allende’s rise was negligible. Ambassador Korry, for example, wrote in August 1970 that the embassy staff in Chile was “unable to identify any vital U.S. security interests in Chile. The fall of Chile to Marxist totalitarianism,” Korry concluded, “cannot . . . be considered a threat to the nation in military terms.”<sup>133</sup> The authors of NSSM 97 reached a similar conclusion: “The U.S. has no vital national interests within Chile . . . The world military balance of power would not be significantly altered by an Allende government.”<sup>134</sup> Kissinger’s aide Viron Vaky, while pointing out how felling Allende violated American moral values, also deprecated the stakes involved in Chile: “What we propose is patently a violation of our own principles and policy tenets. . . . If these principles have any meaning, we normally depart from them only to meet the gravest threat to us, e.g., to our survival. Is Allende a mortal threat to the U.S.? It is hard to argue this.”<sup>135</sup>

The costs to the United States of an Allende administration were more psychological than material, and officials worried more about the message that a socialist state in Latin America might send to observers than the actual security threat posed by Allende’s regime. This concern is reflected in President Nixon’s remarks in a meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) on 6 November 1970. Nixon worried about the effect that the successful establishment of a leftist regime would have on other states in the region. “If Chile moves as we expect and is able to get away with it,” the President remarked, “. . . it gives courage to others who are sitting on the fence in Latin America,” important countries like Brazil and Argentina. “If we let the potential leaders in South America think they can move like Chile and have it both ways, we will be in trouble. . . . Latin America is not gone, and we want to keep it.”<sup>136</sup> Nixon thus subscribed to a version of the domino theory, whereby the fall of one country to communism in South America would inexorably lead to more, and the United States had to head off that eventuality by preventing the first domino from falling. Michael Grow, in his recent book on U.S. covert interventions in Latin America, also makes a

<sup>132</sup> Kissinger, “NSC Meeting, 6 November—Chile.”

<sup>133</sup> Edward M. Korry, Contingency Paper, “Fidelism Without Fidel,” August 1970, quoted in Grow, *U.S. Presidents and Latin American Interventions*, 101.

<sup>134</sup> “Options paper for NSC-Chile (NSSM 97).”

<sup>135</sup> Vaky, NSC action memo [Non Log] to Kissinger, “Chile—40 Committee Meeting, Monday—14 September,” 14 September 1970, quoted in Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*, 11.

<sup>136</sup> The White House, memorandum of conversation, “NSC Meeting—Chile (NSSM 97).”

strong case that Nixon and Kissinger were motivated not by immediate security concerns but rather by the potential damage to U.S. credibility that would result from a weak U.S. response to what they perceived as another test of U.S. resolve. As Kissinger put it, “displays of American impotence in one part of the world . . . would inevitably erode our credibility in other parts of the world.” The presence of a Marxist regime in Chile would not only undermine hemispheric unity, feeding a perception of U.S. weakness, but could also encourage communists in NATO ally countries like Italy and France, who—if they came to power—could unhinge the entire Western alliance.<sup>137</sup>

Amid these concerns for security and credibility, however, economic interests also surfaced as a possible motivating factor for U.S. covert intervention. NSSM 97 mentioned doubts regarding Chile’s ability to repay U.S. multinational corporations following nationalization of several industries: “It is unlikely, however, that it [the Allende government] can complete its announced program of nationalization with ‘fair compensation’ to U.S. investors.”<sup>138</sup> Indeed, the assertion has been made elsewhere that “at least some of the impetus for intervention” in Chile was that “Allende’s efforts to nationalize the copper industry fueled demands that the Nixon administration destabilize his government.”<sup>139</sup> Others argue that Nixon feared not only immediate corporate losses in Chile but also “the example the Chilean expropriations would set for the rest of Latin America, and indeed the entire Western Hemisphere.”<sup>140</sup> Finally, some scholars note that companies like International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT), one of the largest foreign companies operating in Chile, offered money to the CIA to oppose Allende and lobbied U.S. government officials—including the president—to bring about Allende’s fall. Officials from ITT volunteered to provide one million dollars in a meeting with Kissinger and Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms on 11 September 1970, “for the purpose of assisting any [U.S.] government plan . . . to stop Allende.”<sup>141</sup> Sigmund claims that Nixon issued his famous 15 September marching orders to Helms in direct response to an appeal from PepsiCo President Donald Kendall.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Kissinger quoted in Grow, *U.S. Presidents and Latin American Interventions*, 109. On U.S. policy makers’ concerns for credibility, see *ibid.*, 102–109.

<sup>138</sup> “Options paper for NSC-Chile (NSSM 97).”

<sup>139</sup> Rosato, “Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory,” 591. For an explicit statement of the economic argument for U.S. intervention in Chile, see Seymour M. Hersh, *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House* (New York: Summit, 1983), 270, 296.

<sup>140</sup> Lubna Z. Qureshi, *Nixon, Kissinger, and Allende: U.S. Involvement in the 1973 Coup in Chile* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2009), 88.

<sup>141</sup> The Report of the Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations, *The International Telephone and Telegraph Company in Chile, 1970–1971*, quoted in Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*, 18. Former DCI John McCone happened to be on ITT’s board of directors.

<sup>142</sup> Sigmund, *United States and Democracy in Chile*, 83. See also Qureshi, *Nixon, Kissinger, and Allende*, 50–51. For a reproduction of Helms’s handwritten notes from the 15 September meeting, see Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*.

It is impossible to prove definitively that the Nixon administration's determination to overthrow Allende was not driven by protection of U.S. private economic interests; what government official, after all, would admit that he was doing the bidding of multinational corporations in seeking the ouster of a foreign leader? The documentary record is thus likely biased against revealing economic motives. That said, several pieces of evidence tell against the economic argument. As Peter Kornbluh has demonstrated, for example, coup plotting did not begin the day Allende won the popular vote in Chile; U.S. government agencies "had already been preparing and evaluating coup contingencies for weeks before Nixon issued his directive."<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, the 40 Committee had already met twice by 15 September to explore U.S. options to deny Allende the presidency, and CIA headquarters had instructed its Santiago Station to make contact with Chilean military officers to assess the feasibility of mounting a coup.<sup>144</sup> It is also notable that the CIA declined offers of money from ITT to funnel to candidates opposed to Allende during the summer of 1970.<sup>145</sup> It is thus hard to argue that Nixon's meeting with Pepsico's Kendall was the decisive turning point in U.S. support for a coup. Indeed, some evidence indicates that rather than corporate interests driving administration policy, it was actually the government that steered private sector actors. After Allende's victory in the popular vote on 4 September 1970, government officials began to pressure U.S. businesses with interests in Chile to curtail their operations to cause an economic crisis in the country. Ambassador Korry recommended putting pressure on companies like Ford, Anaconda Copper, and Bank of America to pull out of Chile, and the State Department met with executives from some of these companies "to enlist their support."<sup>146</sup> The most that proponents of the economic perspective have been able to show is a coincidence of interests between business and government; however, "no conclusive evidence has yet emerged that the intervention was based on Nixon's concern for the welfare of U.S. investors in Chile."<sup>147</sup> The preponderance of the evidence thus weighs against SH4.

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<sup>143</sup> Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*, 7–9. This included, among other things, the secret CIA-authored annex to NSSM 97 entitled "Extreme Option—Overthrow Allende." Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> "Minutes of the Meeting of the 40 Committee," 9 September 1970, State Chile Declassification Project Tranche III; State cable to Embassy Santiago, "Meeting of 40 Committee," 14 September 1970, State Chile Declassification Project Tranche III; and CIA, memorandum, 9 September 1970, CIA Chile Declassification Project Tranche III. Documents from the State Department Chile Declassification Project may be found at <http://foia.state.gov/SearchColls/CollsSearch.asp>.

<sup>145</sup> Sigmund, *Overthrow of Allende and the Politics of Chile*, 112. The agency did counsel ITT on how to channel its money through private Chilean sources, however.

<sup>146</sup> Kornbluh, *Pinochet File*, 18.

<sup>147</sup> Grow, *U.S. Presidents and Latin American Interventions*, 100. On the personal ties between Nixon and business leaders, and the coincidence of interests between them, see Qureshi, *Nixon, Kissinger, and Allende*, 67–71.

## SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

To summarize, Chile was an established democracy during the time of U.S. covert intervention and was recognized as such by the U.S. officials who directed attempts to overthrow the Allende government. Intervention was covert because these policy makers feared the international repercussions of overthrowing another democratic regime, not the domestic political backlash that might ensue. When the coup occurred, U.S. policy makers were aware that Chile was bound for military dictatorship and that democratic governance would not return anytime soon. This evidence contradicts normative explanations of democratic peace. Norms arguments contend that democracies externalize their internal norms of peaceful conflict resolution and respect for individual autonomy and rights. It is hard to reconcile aggressive and violent actions by one democracy against another democracy with norms arguments, especially if leaders in one democracy recognize the other country as democratic. Furthermore, democracies should not replace the foreign governments they overthrow with repressive dictators.

Covert intervention also seems incompatible with the checks and balances version of the institutional argument because such behavior demonstrates that democratic institutions do not necessarily constrict the actions of democratic governments. If leaders can simply do an end run around institutional limitations whenever they want to act secretly and avoid discovery by the voters or their elected representatives, then checks and balances are not very constraining. The number of covert actions undertaken by the United States alone during the Cold War supports this view. Moreover, the evidence from Chile shows that U.S. leaders were not worried about the domestic consequences of discovery when choosing to act covertly. Fear that the public would disapprove of targeting another democracy, in other words, did not prevent U.S. elites from taking action nor did it force them to act secretly.

The evidence for the selectorate argument is mixed. The United States targeted a much weaker country and supported the installation of a military regime that would fight communism and not be susceptible to leftist influence. This evidence is consistent with the selectorate theory (although it is also consistent with other theories, including realism).<sup>148</sup> The argument also leads us to expect that because the Nixon administration was acting secretly and without accountability to the public, it could act at the behest of private economic interests rather than advance the public good. The evidence, however, does not support this conjecture, as Nixon and Kissinger were motivated mainly by a perceived threat to U.S. national interests rather than the private interests of U.S. corporations.

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<sup>148</sup> Indeed, more research is needed to try to distinguish between these rival arguments. Because the observed outcome is the same, scholars must focus on the competing causal logics: whether leaders are motivated primarily by concerns of external security or retaining office at home.

How did policy makers weigh the value of overthrowing Allende versus the value of not getting caught? Nixon was adamant that Allende be ousted and was furious when the CIA failed to keep him out of office. Kissinger, however, tried to veto the initial Viaux plot because of its low likelihood of success and the consequences of a failed coup. Still, Kissinger kept alive the general possibility of a coup, and the CIA supported a second bumbling plot that also involved Viaux. Most on the CIA side thought there was hardly any chance of blocking Allende, and no chance at all of hiding U.S. involvement, since everyone in the Chilean military knew what the United States wanted. The bulk of the evidence thus supports the view that the Nixon administration pushed for a coup in 1970 despite low odds of success and a high likelihood that American involvement would be exposed.<sup>149</sup>

Our findings have implications for arguments about democracy and preventive war. Randall Schweller, for example, contends that democracies do not launch preventive wars because democratic citizens are only willing to pay the costs of war when a threat is truly imminent. Democracies also find the idea of attacking a country now because it might develop into a threat later morally abhorrent.<sup>150</sup> The U.S. attack on Iraq in 2003 sparked a reevaluation of Schweller's argument because it appeared to be a preventive war initiated by a democracy, and scholars have discovered other examples—such as Israel's attack on Egypt in 1956—that were arguably preventive wars.<sup>151</sup> What is striking about the overthrow of Allende and other cases of U.S. covert regime change is the degree to which policy makers expressed preventive motivations for their actions. On the one hand, U.S. officials understood that communists were not yet dominant in these countries, but worried that they would take over in the future. On the other hand, leaders feared that more and more countries would fall to communism if the United States did not act to stop it. In other words, the United States acted to avert the possibility of communist takeovers in currently democratic countries and the longer-term chance that more regimes might turn to communism and perhaps threaten American security. These cases provide further evidence against the view that democracies do not act preventively.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> This evidence supports those who argue against selection effects as a cause of democratic victory in war. See Michael C. Desch, *Power and Military Effectiveness: The Fallacy of Democratic Triumphalism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); and Alexander B. Downes, "How Smart and Tough Are Democracies? Reassessing Theories of Democratic Victory in War," *International Security* 33, no. 4 (Spring 2009): 9–51.

<sup>150</sup> Randall L. Schweller, "Domestic Structure and Preventive War: Are Democracies More Pacific?" *World Politics* 44, no. 2 (January 1992): 235–69.

<sup>151</sup> Jack S. Levy and Joseph R. Gochal, "Democracy and Preventive War: Israel and the 1956 Sinai Campaign," *Security Studies* 11, no. 2 (Winter 2001/02): 1–49. See also Scott A. Silverstone, *Preventive War and American Democracy* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>152</sup> Moreover, these interventions were undertaken despite low confidence in success, and if they had failed, more costly U.S. invasions might have resulted.

Space constraints preclude us from examining other cases of covert intervention in great detail. That is why we selected the Chilean case: it is perhaps the critical case for evaluating the compatibility of covert intervention and democratic peace theories because it was indisputably a democracy and was perceived as such by U.S. policy makers. Future research should examine other cases where a democracy helped to overthrow an elected government, such as Iran (1953), Guatemala (1954), Congo (1960), and British Guyana (1963). In Guatemala, for example, the Eisenhower administration overturned the government of Jacobo Arbenz even though many in Washington viewed his regime as democratic.<sup>153</sup> Moreover, there is abundant evidence in the Guatemalan case that U.S. officials feared the international repercussions of acting openly against Arbenz, but little to indicate that fear of a domestic backlash forced them to move secretly.<sup>154</sup> Finally, Eisenhower and his advisors went ahead with the operation despite believing prospects for success were uncertain and failure was likely to be exposed.<sup>155</sup>

Evidence thus suggests that the U.S. reaction to Allende's election in Chile was not an aberration but rather the rule.<sup>156</sup> In fact, U.S. leaders during the Cold War tended to view democracy in the developing world as a problem because they perceived Third World peoples as politically immature and unready for democratic self-government. Moreover, the modernization process entailed significant risks. As a document drafted by the Kennedy administration's Policy Planning Council in 1962 put it, "because of the structural and social upheavals which generally accompany the modernization process, all developing nations are susceptible to Communist subversion and insurgency to varying degrees." Walt Rostow, a member of Kennedy's national security staff, agreed, writing a year earlier that the "weak transitional governments that one is likely to find during this modernization process are highly vulnerable to subversion." Authoritarian or military rule in the short to

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<sup>153</sup> Piero Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944–1954* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 215–16; Schlesinger and Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit*, 49; and Nick Cullather, *Secret History: The CIA's Classified Account of Its Operations in Guatemala, 1952–1954* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 8.

<sup>154</sup> See, for example, Ambassador Peurifoy, letter to Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Cabot, 28 December 1953; and CIA, memorandum, "Weekly PBSUCCESS Meeting with DD/P," 9 March 1954, *FRUS*, 1952–1954, *Guatemala*, 79 and 113.

<sup>155</sup> The defining moment occurred on 22 June 1954, with Carlos Castillo Armas's diminutive invasion force stalemated and most of his American-provided and piloted aircraft out of commission. CIA Director Allen Dulles went to the president and asked for authorization to provide the rebels with more planes. As Weiner recounts the episode, "Eisenhower asked what the rebellion's chances of success were at the moment. Zero, Dulles confessed. And if the CIA had more planes and bombs? Maybe 20 percent, Dulles guessed." Ike approved the request, knowing that aircraft provided a sure sign of U.S. involvement. Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes*, 102.

<sup>156</sup> Another potential outcome to examine other than war/no war or covert intervention might be the use of coercive threats or low-level uses of force by powerful democracies against weaker ones. Norms and checks and balances theories of DP would likely prohibit such conduct, but selectorate theory would not.

medium term was the solution for American policy makers: a firm hand was needed to keep order and prevent the spread of communist influence during the turbulent transition period. As a 1959 State Department study put it, “authoritarianism *is required* to lead backward societies through their socio-economic revolutions.” According to David Schmitz, “Supporting right-wing dictatorships was, therefore, seen as a lesser evil than a communist takeover and, therefore, justified as being necessary in the service to a higher purpose of defending freedom.”<sup>157</sup> Democracy, in short, was more often part of the problem than part of the solution.

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<sup>157</sup> Quotations are from Schmitz, *United States and Right-Wing Dictatorships*, 18, 12, 15 (italics in original), and 19. See also Schmitz, *Thank God They're on Our Side*, 5, 72, 181–87.