

Chronology

1930:

A military coup overthrows President Hipólito Yrigoyen of the centrist party known as the Radical Civic Union. Yrigoyen was the first president to have been cleanly elected by a secret and obligatory vote; he represented the accession to the government of the new middle classes of immigrant origins.

In the following half century, Argentina will undergo no fewer than one military coup per decade and will be governed by more presidents who owe their office to the sword than to the ballot. During this period, which lasted until the democratic election of President Raúl Alfonsín, also a Radical Civic Union member, in 1983, only two elected presidents successfully concluded the constitutional term of six years, and both were retired army generals. One of them, Agustín P. Justo, came to power through fraudulent elections in 1932. The other, Juan D. Perón, was overthrown in the middle of his second term as president in 1955.

1943:

A military group that sympathizes with the Axis Powers takes control of the government. Among them is Perón, then a colonel, who becomes, successively, secretary of labor and social welfare, minister of war and vice

president. While serving as secretary of labor he formulates a policy of respect for the rights of workers, inspired by the social doctrines of the Catholic Church.

1945:

Perón is arrested by his comrades and a spontaneous popular demonstration demanding his freedom converges on the center of Buenos Aires from the suburbs.

1946:

Perón is elected president in a clean vote.

1955:

On June 16, navy planes drop nine and a half tons of bombs on the Plaza de Mayo, in front of the Government House, in a failed attempt to overthrow Perón, reelected three years before with 62 percent of the vote. This is the overture to the violence that will envelop Argentina until 1983.

In September, a military junta overthrows Perón, disbands the Congress, dissolves the Supreme Court, takes control of the unions, and governs in a state of siege. A decree by the Executive Power establishes prison sentences for anyone who publicly speaks the name of ex-President Perón or his wife Evita. The military steals Evita's embalmed corpse.

1956:

In June, General Juan José Valle and two dozen Peronists, both military and civilian, are shot on the orders of military president Pedro Aramburu, in reprisal for an uprising aimed at holding free elections.

In October, the exiled Perón sends his "General Directives for all Peronists" and his "Instructions for Leaders," in which he recommends armed resistance against the government, the organization of guerrilla forces to combat it, the use of bombs, and the assassination of adversaries.

Members of the Argentine military take classes at the School of War in Paris while French colonels teach Argentine officers at the military institutes of Buenos Aires. The counterinsurgency tactics employed by the French in Indochina and Algeria are studied.

1958:

Radical Civic Union politician Arturo Frondizi becomes president, elected by the votes of the outlawed Peronist movement, to whom he has promised participation in the country's political system. During the forty-six months of his administration, he will face thirty-two standoffs with the military, some of them involving the deployment of tanks in the streets of Buenos

Aires. The intensity of the Peronist resistance grows; oil pipelines are blown up and there is a generalized sabotage of manufacturing. Striking railroad workers are militarized and soldiers run the trains. Tanks break down the doors of the Lisandro de la Torre meat-packing plant, which has been occupied by its workers.

1959:

On January 1, Fidel Castro and Ernesto Che Guevara enter Havana in triumph. They propose, among other things, to transform the Andes into a larger version of the Sierra Maestra, the mountains where the Cuban insurgency began.

1961:

The Argentine politician John William Cooke, one of Juan D. Perón's personal representatives, participates in the Cuban resistance against the invaders at the Playa Girón in the Bay of Pigs. Cooke invites Perón to relocate to Cuba, but the former president prefers to go to Spain, where he will live until 1973.

U.S. President John F. Kennedy announces the Alliance for Progress. Argentine officers learn counterinsurgency techniques at the School of the Americas, and Argentine guerrillas are trained in Cuba. Superimposed on Argentina's internal political dynamic are the strategic conflicts of the cold war.

1962:

Frondizi allowed Peronist candidates to participate in elections for provincial governorships. One of them wins in the decisive province of Buenos Aires, and as a result Frondizi is overthrown. Strife within the military allows the president of the Senate, José María Guido, rather than the chief of the army, to ascend to the presidency in Frondizi's place. In September, various military factions have an armed confrontation over the control of a weak President Guido.

1963:

In April, the opposing military factions confront each other once more, this time with airplanes and armor-plated vehicles. Army tanks destroy Naval Aviation's runways, giving rise to a lasting hostility. Out of these combats a new strongman emerges, General Juan Carlos Onganía, who presents himself as the leader of the "army of the constitution and the law" and says he supported the call for elections, but then returned to being strictly professional, without intervening in "internal politics." But five weeks after he so clearly stated his submission to the civil authorities, Peronism is outlawed

once again. In June, with barely 23 percent of the vote, the Radical Civic Union candidate Arturo Illia is elected president.

1964:

Onganía remains commander in chief of the army. From West Point, he formulates the doctrine of ideological borders and calls for intervention by the army in internal politics as an extraconstitutional watchdog. In Salta, the police break up a Marxist guerrilla detachment.

President Charles de Gaulle of France visits Argentina. Perón orders that he be received as if he were Perón himself, and demonstrations in the streets throughout the country checkmate the government. Months later, Perón attempts to return to Argentina, but, at the request of Illia's government, the Brazilian military detains his plane in Río de Janeiro.

1965:

The Peronists achieve good results in all the elections they are permitted to participate in, which makes them the foreseeable victors of the following year's elections in the province of Buenos Aires.

1966:

On June 28, prior to the provincial elections in Buenos Aires, a military junta overthrows Illia, imposes a Revolutionary Statute that is superior to the Constitution, and installs Onganía in the presidency. The Congress and the Supreme Court are dissolved and all political and labor union activity is banned.

The clerical organization Opus Dei participates in the national cabinet to a significant degree, and Cardinal Antonio Caggiano, who is also a military bishop, signs Onganía's decree of assumption to the presidency and participates in all the official ceremonies. Onganía and a group of prominent generals go on spiritual retreats where they undergo the influence of the Catholic fundamentalist groups Verbe and La Cité Catholique, both of which originated in France.

1968:

A detachment of half a dozen guerrillas, members of the Peronist Armed Forces, is routed in the province of Tucumán.

1969:

On May 29, columns of workers and students occupy Córdoba, the country's second largest city, in protest against Onganía's socioeconomic policies. The police are overwhelmed, and the army intervenes and fires into the crowd in order to regain control of the city. That same day, an unknown

guerrilla commando kills Augusto Vandor, leader of the metallurgical workers, who is denounced as a paradigm of the alliance between the Peronist union bureaucracy and the military establishment.

Amid the commotion caused by both episodes, Nelson Rockefeller arrives in Argentina as part of his mission through Latin America. In the report he sends to President Nixon, he describes a growing Communist threat, praises the role of the armed forces, and recommends strengthening the continent's police forces as the first line of combat.

Onganía announces a procession to the sanctuary of Luján in order to consecrate Argentina to the heart of the Virgin Mary. But the Catholic Church is divided: under the auspices of the Second Vatican Council and the meeting of the Latin American Catholic Church in Medellín, many Bishops and priests defend the so-called choice for the poor, justify a violent response to oppression, and support a dialogue between Catholics and Marxists. All the conditions for a militarization of politics are present.

1970:

A commando from the new organization known as the Montoneros, which takes its name from the irregular parties of gauchos who resisted pro-British liberalism during the nineteenth century, kidnaps former dictator Aramburu on May 29. The Montoneros' members emerged from the group known as Catholic Action and participated in social work camps led by priests in the country's poorest regions. The Montoneros combine personal attacks against members of the military and union leaders with community work among the poor and political organizing of the Peronist Youth. After a mock trial for the 1956 shootings, Aramburu is killed in a cellar, and his corpse is submerged in quicklime. From his exile in Madrid, Perón approves of the deed and congratulates the Montoneros, whose first communication commends Aramburu's soul to God.

Onganía is overthrown by the army, which puts in his place the military attaché in Washington, General Roberto Levingston, a counterinsurgency specialist. Massive demonstrations to protest the socioeconomic situation and demand a new political beginning take place across the country, which becomes ungovernable by the military. While the Peronist trade unions are negotiating agreements with the government, a resistance against the military dictatorship is organized by grass roots union leaders, the Montoneros, and the Peronist Youth. The same fracture that had split the Church is now dividing Peronism. Perón says he must act as "The Holy Father" and give his blessing to all the conflicting sectors.

Small Marxist guerrilla organizations known as the "People's Revolutionary army" (ERP) and the "Revolutionary Armed Forces" (FAR) also begin to take action. Both groups are inspired by the Cuban, Chinese, and Vietnamese

experiences, but while the ERP remains faithful to Marxist orthodoxy, the FAR begins a process of approximating itself to the mass movement of Peronism.

1971:

The chief of the army, General Alejandro Lanusse, deposes Levingston, assumes the presidency, and calls elections in which, for the first time, the Peronists are permitted to participate. His idea is to strip the guerrillas of their most powerful rallying point and isolate them politically and socially, given the difficulty of suppressing them by force.

1972:

With the help of the Catholic Church, the military had been keeping Evita's embalmed body hidden in a cemetery in Italy; as a gesture of goodwill, Lanusse now returns it to Perón in Madrid. Lanusse passes a law establishing that only those who were residing in the country before August are eligible to be candidates in the upcoming elections and challenges Perón during a meeting of the top ranks of the military: "I don't think he has the guts to come back." Perón returns to Argentina in November, acclaimed by mass demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of people. Since the deadline has passed and he is ineligible to be a candidate, he designates his personal representative, Héctor J. Cámpora, to run for the presidency and returns to Madrid. The campaign's central buzz word is "Cámpora to the government, Perón to power," and the slogan "FAR and the Montoneros are our companions" is chanted at every Peronist rally, which infuriates the military.

On August 22, after faking an escape attempt, the navy executes a dozen guerrillas imprisoned at its base in Trelew. Their bodies are laid out in the central headquarters of the Justicialista Party, but its doors are broken down by the police, who take away the coffins in order to keep the bodies from being autopsied.

1973:

Cámpora is elected president on March 11. For his swearing-in ceremony on May 25, he invites Chilean President Salvador Allende and the Cuban Osvaldo Dorticós. His first decision is to free all the imprisoned guerrillas; this is unanimously approved by Congress, which also dissolves as unconstitutional a special tribunal created to try them. As they arrive from the country's various jails, the prisoners are given a hero's welcome in the provincial government houses. The FAR merges with the Montoneros into a single organization.

On June 20, Perón finally returns to the country. His private secretary and one of Cámpora's ministers, José López Rega, a former chief of police

and an astrologer, calls on unionists and members of the military to organize an armed contingent to be positioned on the stage above the crowd gathered near Ezeiza Airport during Perón's first public appearance in Argentina. The crowd begins to assemble the night before and is estimated at more than a million people. When the columns of the Peronist Youth approach, they are fired upon from above. The crowd scatters and at least thirteen people are killed and three hundred wounded by bullets.

Perón comes out against the Montoneros and forces Cámpora to resign. Raúl Lastiri, López Rega's son-in-law, assumes the presidency for an interim period and calls new elections. On September 23, Perón is elected president for the third time, on a ticket completed by his wife Isabelita. Two days later, the Montoneros kill the general secretary of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), José Rucci, a trade unionist, as one of those responsible for what happened in Ezeiza, but they do not claim responsibility for the attack in order not to enrage Perón. The ERP continues kidnapping U.S. businessmen and demanding ransom for them and attacking army facilities.

1974:

On May 1, Perón calls the Montoneros "immature imbeciles," whereupon they turn their backs on him and leave the Plaza de Mayo half empty. Perón dies on June 1 and Isabelita assumes the presidency, while López Rega governs from behind the throne. The Triple A (Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance) begins to take action, kidnapping and assassinating intellectuals and politicians suspected of links to the guerrillas. In September, the Montoneros announce they are going back underground. The ERP opens a rural guerrilla front in the northern province of Tucumán.

1975:

Without the political umbrella of Peronism, the Montoneros' actions lose their mass character and their acceptance. Isabelita charges the army with controlling the growing social agitation, and Ricardo Balbín, the leader of the opposition party, the Radical Civic Union, says that the striking workers constitute an "industrial guerrilla group." The government orders the army to "annihilate the actions of subversion," first in Tucumán, then throughout the country. The first leader of the troops in Tucumán is General Adel Vilas, a disciple of the French, who defends torture as the weapon of choice in this type of battle and advocates the extension of the conflict to the universities. He is succeeded by General Domingo Bussi, who studied counterinsurgency in Vietnam.

Swept out of Tucumán, the ERP attempts, in the final days of the year, a desperate attack on a Buenos Aires military installation. The attack's

failure ultimately leads to the organization's demise. The Montoneros attack a military facility in the province of Formosa, something only the ERP had done until that point, and they are also repelled with heavy losses.

The president of the bishopric, Monseñor Adolfo Tortolo, announces to an audience of business people that a purification process will soon be carried out. The Order for Army Operations includes dispensations for special methods of interrogation, a euphemism for torture. The navy follows suit; the commander of naval operations, Admiral Luis Mendía, communicates this to navy officers in the Puerto Belgrano naval base. He maintains that these methods, as well as the elimination of living prisoners by throwing them into the sea, have been approved by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. But because of the international isolation of the Chilean dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, the Argentine military must keep its procedures carefully under wraps.

1976:

On March 23, the commanders in chief of the army, the navy and the air force pay a visit to Monseñor Tortolo at the bishopric's headquarters. Hours later, on March 24, they overthrow and imprison Isabel Perón. The governor of the province of La Rioja, Carlos Menem, and other Peronist leaders, are confined to a navy prison ship anchored in the port of Buenos Aires. Once again, the Congress and the Supreme Court are dissolved. Clandestine concentration camps are set up in units of the armed and security forces, and those who are abducted are taken to them, always secretly and without any judicial order. There they are tortured, then covertly murdered. In a meeting of the bishopric, Tortolo defends torture with theological arguments.

The military junta designates the chief of the army, General Jorge Videla, to be president, but the junta is being torn apart by internal conflicts. Old jealousies are erupting between the army and the navy, led by Admiral Emilio Massera, who maintains that the junta is the organ of maximum power and Videla no more than its delegated administrator.

In the plans approved by the military junta, it falls to the army to command the operations of the dirty war, and the jurisdictions are clearly determined. But Massera does not respect those agreements and invades the jurisdiction of the army as a way of accumulating intramilitary power. His instrument for doing so is the Navy School of Mechanics (ESMA), where a clandestine concentration camp is operating. The task force that administers it answers directly to the chief of the navy, who personally participates in certain operations.

In June, an army patrol brings down the leader of the ERP, Roberto Santucho, and the dismantling of that organization is complete.

Also in June, at a breakfast during a meeting of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Chile, Argentine Foreign Minister Admiral César Guzzetti tells Secretary of State Henry Kissinger what the Argentine military is doing. Kissinger replies that they have to finish off the terrorists before the installation of the new U.S. Congress in January 1977. Kissinger is counting on the reelection of Gerald Ford, who is defeated in November by Jimmy Carter.

1977:

The Argentine military considers Carter's human rights policies a betrayal and establishes links with members of the ultraconservative opposition, such as Senator Jesse Helms. Videla meets with Carter's envoy, Patricia Derian, and tells her he cannot control the lower ranks.

On March 25, the writer and journalist Rodolfo J. Walsh is abducted after having distributed an "Open Letter to the Military Junta," in which he denounced the torture and murder of prisoners.

On Christmas Eve, the members of the founding nucleus of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, which had been infiltrated by Lieutenant Alfredo Astiz, are abducted from the Church of the Holy Cross. They are tortured in the ESMA by Lieutenant Antonio Pernías and never reappear.

1978:

Admiral Massera retires. His successor, Armando Lambruschini, consults with the papal nuncio, Pio Laghi, on the situation of the prisoners. He doesn't want to kill them, but if he leaves them alive he is afraid they will reveal what they saw.

1979:

The Interamerican Commission on Human Rights of the OAS visits Argentina.

1980:

The OAS report appears; it states that the thousands of disappeared persons have been killed by official forces and that the alarming and systematic use of torture has been proven. The government responds that the state is exercising its power of self-defense and using the "appropriate means." Adolfo Pérez Esquivel of the Service of Peace and Justice, who denounces the massive violations of human rights, receives the Nobel Peace Prize.

After Somoza is overthrown by the Sandinistas, the Argentine military trains the first contingents of the Contras, by agreement with the CIA. They also instruct members of the militaries of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador on torture methods.

1981:

A year of economic crisis and a rapid turnover of military presidents. In March, General Roberto Viola succeeds Videla; in December, General Leopoldo Galtieri removes Viola from office. The political parties demand that elections be held for the first time in a decade and the unions demand economic improvements.

1982:

On April 2, the military junta occupies the Malvinas, Georgias, and South Sandwich Islands, which have been controlled by Great Britain since the first decades of the nineteenth century. Margaret Thatcher's government sends a powerful fleet to recover them. The navy, which had encouraged the occupation, withdraws its fleet to the coast at the news that the United Kingdom is using nuclear submarines. Astiz is captured by the British after surrendering the South Georgias Islands without resistance. Ultimately, Argentina loses the war. Galtieri is deposed by his peers. Fatally wounded, the dictatorship calls elections.

1983:

In July, the courts order the arrest of Massera for the murder of a mistress's husband, the businessman Fernando Branca, who was invited for a sail on the yacht Massera used as chief of the navy and never appeared.

In September, the military junta passes an autoamnesty for all members of the military charged with human rights violations. In October the leader of the Radical Civic Union, Raúl Alfonsín, wins the presidency with 52 percent of the vote; it is the first time the Peronist movement has been defeated in clean elections. He is sworn into office on December 10. The new Congress nullifies the autoamnesty. Alfonsín creates a presidential commission of leading members of the society to investigate human rights violations and asks the courts to press charges against Videla, Massera, and other leaders of the dirty war.

1984:

At the demand of the national government, which wants the military to purge itself, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces orders the arrest of the three commanders in chief who held power in 1976. The National Commission on the Disappeared, presided over by the writer Ernesto Sabato, delivers its report to the president. The report states that human rights were violated in an institutional and state-ordained manner and that after being tortured the disappeared were thrown into the river or into the sea. Nine thousand cases are verified, with the names and surnames of the deceased, but the actual figure is believed to be higher. In a collective response, the Supreme Council

affirms that the orders given by the former commanders were perfectly correct. The Federal Chamber removes the case from the military courts and carries on with the trial, which is extended to include the two military juntas that succeeded the first one. In all, nine former military leaders are charged, three of whom were also de facto presidents.

1985:

Between April and September, the Federal Chamber hears testimony from survivors of the clandestine concentration camps and national and international leaders (such as Patricia Derian) for twelve hours a day. On December 9, Videla and Massera are sentenced to life imprisonment for treasonous homicides, illegal deprivations of liberty, torture, and robbery; former general Roberto Viola, former admiral Armando Lambruschini, and former brigadier general Ramón Agosti all receive prison sentences as well, and all those convicted are also dishonorably discharged from the armed forces.

The sentencing order describes the "criminal plan" adopted by the former military leaders which consisted in "apprehending suspects, keeping them secretly in captivity under inhuman conditions, subjecting them to torture in the aim of obtaining information so as ultimately to put them at the disposition of the courts or the National Executive Power or else to eliminate them physically." It also establishes the responsibility of those who carried out these men's orders directly and states that obedience to orders does not excuse those who carried out aberrant crimes.

1986:

The Supreme Court confirms the convictions, though it reduces Viola's and Agosti's sentences. The Federal Chamber hands down prison sentences to the former chiefs of police of Buenos Aires, Colonel Ramón Camps and General Pablo Ovidio Riccheri, and to their former assistant chief, Commissioner Miguel Osvaldo Etchecolatz, as well as to Dr. Jorge Bergés and Corporal Norberto Cozzani. The entire pyramid of repression is thus covered, from the highest-ranking military leaders to the low ranking policemen and civilian collaborators.

The same court takes over the trial for the events at the Navy School of Mechanics. Alarmed by the military repercussions of the convictions, Alfonsín persuades Congress to sanction a law known as Full Stop: the judges will have 60 days to bring charges against all those implicated in human rights violations. Once that time has elapsed, all such cases will be considered invalid.

1987:

In February, when the sixty-day statute of limitations ends, Federal Chambers throughout the country have not brought charges against thirty or

forty members of the military, as the government had hoped, but against almost four hundred. In the ESMA proceedings, the Federal Chamber of the Capital orders the arrest of nineteen men, among them admirals, officers, and noncommissioned officers. As the summonses continue to reach officers facing charges in other parts of the country, the military tension grows.

On April 15, Lieutenant Colonel Ernesto Barreiro ignores a summons from the Federal Chamber of Córdoba to give testimony in response to charges of torture and treasonous homicide. Lieutenant Colonel Aldo Rico occupies the School of Infantry in the largest military garrison in Argentina. His commandos, known as the *carapintadas* because their faces are painted, demand that the trials of their comrades be brought to a halt. "The shifting terrain of the law and judicial chicanery is not the soldier's natural habitat. The soldier is trained to show his teeth and bite; combat is his proper environment and his power resides in holding a monopoly on violence," he explains in a document. The president orders the uprising to be repressed, but the military columns take several days to travel a few hundred kilometers. In front of the Legislative Assembly, Alfonsín declares that no civilian or member of the military can use force to negotiate his judicial situation and reaffirms the equality of all before the law. He announces to a crowd that has gathered in the Plaza de Mayo to condemn the uprising that he will go personally to the garrisons to demand the surrender of the *carapintadas*. Upon his return, he calls them "the heroes of the Malvinas war" and asks the demonstrators to disperse, stating that "the house is in order." He bids them good-bye with a disconcerting, "Happy Easter."

In July, he persuades Congress to approve the law of Due Obedience, which exempts from guilt those who tortured or murdered in fulfillment of orders. Only the former military leaders and a select group of generals and former leaders of army corps and security zones remain in prison. Among those set free are Astiz and Pernías.

1988:

The *carapintadas* take part in two new uprisings, the first led by Rico and the second by Colonel Mohamed Ali Seineldín, a former adviser to Panamanian strongman Manuel Noriega. Seineldín says he is receiving directives from the Virgin Mary.

1989:

In January, a remnant of the vanished People's Revolutionary Army occupies the military facility of La Tablada after denouncing a pact between the *carapintadas* and the Peronists which is intended to force Alfonsín to resign.

International credit organizations cut off Argentina's financing, which unleashes a run against the peso. In May, the Peronist candidate Carlos Menem is elected president. Hyperinflation devalues salaries and supermarkets are ransacked for food in several parts of the country. Alfonsín resigns from the presidency and Menem assumes it five months before his term officially begins. In October, he signs a pardon for four hundred officers and non-commissioned officers charged in the *carapintada* rebellions (among them Rico and Seineldín) and for the three former commanders in chief sentenced by the military courts for their role in the Malvinas war, as well as four dozen generals, admirals, colonels, and captains who remained in prison for human rights violations.

1990:

In December, Seineldín leads a new uprising, 48 hours before the arrival in Argentina of President George Bush; the rebellion is put down, weapon in hand, by the assistant chief of staff of the army, General Martín Balza. Menem wants to have the prisoners shot, but is dissuaded by his advisers. Days later, he pardons the former members of the military junta sentenced by the courts, as well as the Montonero leaders Mario Firmenich (sentenced to thirty years' imprisonment), Fernando Vaca Narvaja, and Roberto Perdía (who was living in exile).

1995:

Lieutenant Commander Adolfo Scilingo becomes the first member of the Argentine military to speak openly and at length about his participation in the dirty war.

“If every worker and every farmer had a rifle in their hands, there would never have been a fascist coup!”

—Fidel Castro

Chronology: Chile 1970-73

James Cockcroft and Jane Canning

1970

March 25 The White House “Committee of 40,” headed by National Security Council Director Henry Kissinger and in charge of U.S. plans to prevent Allende’s ascendancy to the presidency or, failing that, of destabilizing his regime until a military coup can overthrow him, meets and approves \$125,000 for a “spoiling operation” against Allende’s Popular Unity coalition.

June Kissinger tells the “Committee of 40” that should Allende win Chile’s elections, “I don’t see why we need to stand by and watch a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people.” The possibility of an Allende victory in Chile is raised at an International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT) board of directors’ meeting. John McCone, former CIA director, and, at the time, a consultant to the CIA and a director of ITT, subsequently holds a number of conversations regarding Chile with CIA Director Richard Helms. Helms’ 1970 notes prophesy that an economic squeeze on Chile will cause its economy to “scream.”

June 27 “Committee of 40” approves \$300,000 for additional anti-Allende propaganda operations.

July 16 John McCone arranges for William Broe (CIA) to talk with Harold Geneen (ITT). Broe tells Geneen that CIA cannot disburse ITT funds but promises to advise ITT on how to channel its own funds. ITT later passes \$350,000 to the Alessandri campaign (Allende's opponent) through an intermediary.

August 18 U.S. National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) 97 is reviewed by the Interdepartmental Group, which considers options ranging from efforts to forge amicable relations with Allende to opposition to him.

September 4 Popular Unity candidate Salvador Allende wins 36.3 percent of the vote in the presidential election, defeating National Party candidate Jorge Alessandri (34.9 percent) and Christian Democrat Radomiro Tomic (27.8 percent). Final outcome is dependent on October 24 vote in Congress between Allende and the runner-up, Alessandri. Traditionally, the candidate with a plurality of popular votes wins the congressional runoff.

September 8 and 14 "Committee of 40" approves \$250,000 for Ambassador Korry to use to influence the October 24 congressional vote.

September 9 Harold Geneen, ITT's Chief Executive Officer, tells John McCone at an ITT board of directors' meeting in New York that he is prepared to put up as much as \$1 million for the purpose of assisting any government plan designed to form a coalition in the Chilean Congress to stop Allende. McCone agrees to communicate this proposal to high Washington officials and meets several days later with Henry Kissinger and Richard Helms.

September 15 President Nixon instructs CIA Director Helms to prevent Allende's accession to office. The CIA is to play a direct role in organizing a military coup d'état. This involvement comes to be known as Track II. Years later, Helms is convicted of perjury for lying to the U.S. Senate about the CIA's foreign and domestic covert activities.

September 16 At an off-the-record White House press briefing, Henry Kissinger warns that the election of Allende would be irreversible and that an Allende-led Chile could become a "contagious example" that "would infect" NATO allies in South America. He also expresses doubt that Chile would experience another free election. (An ex-aide to Kissinger later noted, "Henry thought Allende might lead an anti-U.S. movement in Latin America more effectively than Fidel Castro, because Allende's was a democratic path to power.")

September 29 A CIA official, at the instruction of Richard Helms, meets with a representative of ITT. The CIA officer proposes a plan to accelerate economic disorder in Chile. ITT rejects the proposal.

October Following a White House meeting, the CIA contacts Chilean military conspirators; CIA attempts to defuse a plot by retired General Viaux, but still to generate maximum pressure to overthrow Allende by coup; CIA provides tear gas grenades and three submachine guns to conspirators. ITT submits to White House an 18-point plan designed to assure that Allende "does not get through the crucial next six months."

October 9 Constitutional amendments are introduced into Chile's Congress and later passed, in effect, as a condition for ratifying Allende's election as president. The amendments limit government interference in political parties, education, the "free press," and the armed forces. Allende's power to appoint commanding officers is limited, although he is still allowed to promote officers in the armed forces and *Carabineros*. Allende is obligated to preserve the jobs of the previous administration's state functionaries.

October 14 "Committee of 40" approves \$60,000 for U.S. Ambassador Korry's proposal to purchase a radio station. The money is never spent.

October 16 A secret "eyes only" CIA headquarters cable to the CIA station chief in Santiago (made public years later) gives an "operational guide" based on Kissinger's review of covert coup plotting. "It is firm and continuing policy that Allende be overthrown by a coup," the cable states.

October 22 After two unsuccessful abduction attempts on October 19 and 20, a third attempt to kidnap Chilean Army Commander-in-Chief General René Schneider results in his being fatally shot, reportedly by right-wing elements angry at his failure to take military action against Allende.

October 24 The Chilean Congress votes 153 to 35 in favor of Allende over Alessandri.

November 3 Allende is formally inaugurated as president of Chile.

November 12 Allende announces he is renewing diplomatic, commercial and cultural relations with Cuba.

November 13 "Committee of 40" approves \$25,000 for support of Christian Democratic candidates.

November 19 "Committee of 40" approves \$725,000 for a covert action program in Chile. Approval is later superseded by a January 28, 1971, authorization for nearly twice the amount.

December 21 President Allende proposes a constitutional amendment establishing state control of the large mines and authorizing expropriation of all the foreign firms working them. Both he and the Christian Democratic presidential candidate Tomic had campaigned on a platform calling for nationalization of the copper mines.

December 30 President Allende announces he will be submitting a bill to Congress nationalizing private domestic banks "in order to provide more credit for small and medium-sized businesses."

1971

January 5 Chile establishes diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China.

January 28 "Committee of 40" approves \$1,240,000 for the purchase of radio stations and newspapers and to support municipal candidates and other political activities of anti-Allende parties.

February 12 Chile and Cuba sign a \$20 million trade agreement.

February 27 The U.S. Defense Department announces it is canceling the planned visit to Chile of the nuclear carrier *Enterprise*, earlier welcomed by Allende. All Chile's political parties denounce the decision as a slight to Chileans.

March 22 "Committee of 40" approves \$185,000 additional support for the Christian Democratic Party.

April 4 Allende's Popular Unity coalition garners 49.7 percent of the vote in a four-way field in 280 municipal elections. For the first time in Chilean history, people 18 to 21 years old could vote. Their support contributed to Popular Unity's huge margin of victory. A CIA-funded fascist group, "*Patria y Libertad*" ("Homeland and Liberty"), begins stepping up a campaign of sabotaging factory equipment to hobble the economy.

May 10 "Committee of 40" approves \$77,000 for purchase of a press for the Christian Democratic Party newspaper. The press is not obtained and the funds are used to support the paper.

May 20 "Committee of 40" approves \$100,000 for emergency aid to the Christian Democratic Party to meet short-term debts.

May 26 "Committee of 40" approves \$150,000 for additional aid to Christian Democratic Party to meet debts.

June 30 U.S. State Department announces a \$5 million loan for the Chilean armed forces' purchase of military equipment.

July 6 "Committee of 40" approves \$150,000 for support of opposition candidates in a Chilean by-election.

July 11 In a joint session of the Chilean Congress, a constitutional amendment is unanimously approved permitting the nationalization of the copper industry, source of three-fourths of Chile's foreign exchange. The amendment provides for compensation to copper companies within 30 years at not less than 3 percent interest. Also nationalized are iron ore, steel and nitrates.

August 11 The Export-Import Bank denies a Chilean request for \$21 million in loans and loan guarantees needed to purchase three jets for the national LAN-Chile airline.

September The chiefs of Chile's main foreign corporations – Anaconda Copper, Ford Motor Company, First National City Bank, Bank of America, Ralston Purina and ITT – meet with Secretary of State William Rogers and agree to an economic blockade of Chile. The CIA sets up a "coup team" at the U.S. Embassy in Santiago and pays out millions of dollars to Chilean right-wing groups, newspapers, radio stations, and political figures to accelerate the destabilization campaign.

September 9 "Committee of 40" approves \$700,000 for support to the major Santiago newspaper, *El Mercurio*, which goes on to encourage acts of sedition against the Chilean government, including a military coup.

September 10 President Allende approves Chile's participation in a joint naval exercise with the United States and several Latin American nations.

September 28 President Allende announces that "excess profits" of \$774 million in the previous 15 years will be deducted from compensation to be paid to nationalized copper companies. Earlier, separate Soviet and French teams of technocrats and economists had revealed several abuses by the foreign copper concerns. The opposition Christian Democratic and National parties announce their support of Allende's compensation policies in mid-October.

September 29 The Chilean government assumes operation of the Chilean telephone company (CHITELCO). ITT had owned 70 percent interest in the company since 1930.

September 29 Nathaniel Davis replaces Edward Korry as U.S. Ambassador to Chile.

November 5 "Committee of 40" approves \$815,000 support to opposition parties and to induce a split in the Popular Unity coalition.

November 10 – December 4 Fidel Castro conducts an extensive goodwill tour throughout Chile.

November 30 After a visit to Latin America, White House Director of Communications Herbert G. Klein tells reporters that he and presidential counselor Robert H. Finch had received the “feeling” that the Allende government “won’t last long.”

December 1 The Christian Democratic and National parties organize the “March of the Empty Pots” by women to protest food shortages and the visit of Fidel Castro to Chile.

December 15 “Committee of 40” approves \$160,000 to support two opposition candidates in January 1972 by-elections.

1972

January 19 President Nixon issues a statement warning that, in cases of expropriated U.S. company properties, should compensation not be reasonable then new bilateral economic aid to the expropriating country might be terminated and the United States would withhold its support from loans under consideration in multilateral development banks.

February 29 New York Supreme Court blocks New York bank accounts of Chilean government agencies.

March 21-22 Syndicated columnist Jack Anderson charges that secret ITT documents (later made public) reveal that ITT had dealt regularly with the CIA in efforts to prevent Allende assuming the presidency in 1970 or, failing that, to bring him down afterwards. In October 1970, ITT had submitted to the White House an 18-point plan of economic warfare, subversion and sabotage against Chile, to be directed by a special White House task force and assisted by the CIA, aimed at precipitating economic chaos whereby the Chilean armed forces, “will have to step in and restore order.” One ITT option sent to Kissinger was the halting of all loans by international and U.S. private banks. (Actually, neither the Inter-American Development Bank nor the World Bank had granted new credits to Chile since Allende assumed the presidency, even denying emergency relief to victims of the 1971 earthquake.) Anderson also revealed that in exchange for the Nixon administration’s assistance in toppling Allende, ITT had offered to contribute several hundred thousand dollars to the Nixon campaign for the 1972 U.S. presidential election.

April 11 “Committee of 40” approves an additional \$965,000 for support to *El Mercurio*.

April 24 “Committee of 40” approves \$50,000 for an effort to splinter the Popular Unity coalition.

May 12 President Allende submits a constitutional amendment to the Chilean Congress calling for the expropriation of ITT’s holdings in the Chilean telephone company.

June 16 “Committee of 40” approves \$46,500 to support a candidate in a Chilean by-election.

July 24 Allende attacks the United States for “deliberately restricting” Chile’s credits in 1970-72 and for imposing “a virtual economic blockade” on Chile. (In 1972, Kennecott Copper Company had begun orchestrating an embargo against all Chilean copper exports to the rest of the world. Then, in early 1973, copper prices began plummeting in reaction to President Nixon’s persuading the U.S. Congress to legislate the release of U.S. copper stockpiles, thereby creating a glut on the world market.)

August 21 Allende declares a state of emergency in Santiago province after violence grows out of a one-day strike by most of the capital’s shopkeepers.

September 21 “Committee of 40” approves \$24,000 to support an anti-Allende businessmen’s organization.

October 10 The Confederation of Truck Owners launches a nationwide strike backed by the opposition parties. This leads to the government’s declaration of a state of emergency, not lifted until November 5 when the new military Interior Minister General Carlos Prats negotiates a strike settlement.

October 26 “Committee of 40” approves \$1,427,666 to support opposition political parties and private sector organizations in anticipation of March 1973 congressional elections.

November 4 In a speech honoring the second anniversary of the Popular Unity government, Allende defiantly proclaims the start of “the definitive defeat of the fascist threat.”

December 4 Speaking before the General Assembly of the United Nations, President Allende charges that Chile has been the “victim of serious aggression” and adds, “we have felt the effects of a large-scale external pressure against us.”

December 8 United States announces that in May 1972 it had agreed to extend \$10 million in credit to the Chilean armed forces for purchase of a C-130 air force transport and other equipment, possibly tanks, armored personnel carriers and trucks.

1973

January Inflation reaches 200 percent.

February 12 "Committee of 40" approves \$200,000 to support opposition political parties in the congressional elections.

March 4 In the congressional elections, Allende's Popular Unity coalition wins 43.4 percent of the vote, a 7 percent increase over its vote in the 1970 presidential race.

March 22 Talks between the United States and Chile on political and financial problems end in an impasse.

May 10 A three-week copper strike continues at El Teniente mine and a state of emergency is declared in that region. The most determined strikers are the executive and management staff.

June 5 Chile suspends its foreign shipments of copper as miners' strikes continue.

June 15 Allende meets with copper strikers, and the majority of unskilled workers vote to accept his offer and return to work.

June 20 Thousands of physicians, teachers and students go on strike to protest Allende's handling of the 63-day copper strike. The workers confederation (CUT) calls a general strike next day in support of the government.

June 21 Gunfire, bombings and fighting erupt as government opponents and supporters clash during the huge CUT pro-government strike. The opposition newspaper, *El Mercurio*, is closed by court order for six days following a government charge that it had incited subversion. The following day an appeals court invalidates the closure order.

June 28 The army announces the crushing of a "barracks revolt" against the commanding officers and the government.

June 29 Rebel tank and armored personnel carriers seize control of the downtown area of Santiago and attack the Defense Ministry and the Presidential Palace before troops loyal to the government surround them and force them to surrender. This is the first military attempt to overthrow an elected Chilean government in 42 years. The abortive coup was led by Colonel Roberto Souper, who reportedly was about to be arrested as the head of the "barracks revolt" uncovered by army officials the day before.

July 2 Copper miners agree to return to work, ending a 76-day strike that cost the government an estimated \$60 million and crippled the country's economy.

July 26 Truck owners throughout Chile go on strike, funded by the CIA, once more crippling the economy.

August Christian Democrats hint broadly that they favor a coup and the party's newspaper runs an article claiming the government has been taken over by a "Jewish-communist cell." To assuage big business, Allende approves the eviction of workers from the more than 1,000 workplaces they have occupied. In some factories troops are required to do the job, and some workers are killed.

August 2 The owners of more than 110,000 buses and taxis go on strike.

August 3 At a press conference, Allende charges that 180 acts of terrorism against railroads, highways, bridges, pipelines, schools and hospitals had been committed since the assassination of his naval aide-de-camp a week earlier.

August 7 The navy announces quashing of a servicemen's revolt in Valparaíso.

August 8 Allende announces formation of a new cabinet including the three chiefs of the armed forces and the chief of the *Carabineros*.

August 20 "Committee of 40" approves \$1 million to support opposition political parties and private sector organizations.

August 23 General Carlos Prats resigns as Allende's defense minister and army commander, explaining in his letter of resignation that his participation in the cabinet had caused a left-right split in the army and stating that he was forced to resign by a "sector of army officers." General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte is named army commander on August 24. Prats' resignation is interpreted as a severe blow to Allende.

August 27 Chile's shop owners call another antigovernment strike.

September 4 An estimated 750,000 supporters of Allende's government march in the streets of Santiago to celebrate the third anniversary of his election, chanting "Allende, Allende, the people will defend you!" In a radio and television address, Allende tells them to "be alert, very alert, without losing your serenity." The Confederation of Professional Employees begins an indefinite strike.

September 5 The governing Popular Unity Coalition charges the navy with imprisoning and torturing leftist marines. Allende next day disassociates himself from the statement.

September 8 Commenting on a 2-hour gun battle between air force troops and leftist factory workers, former undersecretary of transport Jaime Faivovich declares, "The armed forces are provoking the workers..."

the military coup is already underway.”

September 11 The Chilean military overthrows the government. Surrounding the Presidential Palace with tanks, armored cars, riflemen, and jet fighter-bombers by air, they issue an ultimatum to Allende to either resign or surrender. Allende refuses to do either and dies during the battle. In the days immediately following the coup, thousands of Chileans are killed or simply “disappear,” as the military establishes complete control over the country.

September 13 The new military government names army commander Augusto Pinochet as president, dissolves Congress, and goes on to end all democratic institutions. Pinochet dismantles Allende’s programs and installs a wholly free-market economy. He abolishes elections, makes strikes and unions illegal, and imposes strict censorship of books, the press and school curriculums. Entire university departments (such as sociology) are shut down.

September – October The junta declares all Marxist political parties illegal and places all other parties in indefinite recess. Press censorship is established, as are detention facilities for opponents of the new regime. Thousands of casualties are reported, including summary executions and “disappearances.” Many years later, mass graves of some of the victims are discovered.

October 15 “Committee of 40” approves \$34,000 for an anti-Allende radio station and the travel costs of pro-junta spokesmen.

[This chronology is taken from the “Salvador Allende Reader: Chile’s voice of Democracy,” edited by James D. Cockcroft and Jane Canning, published by Ocean Press, 2000]

“Venceremos, venceremos
Mil cadenas habrá que romper
Venceremos, venceremos
La miseria sabremos vencer”

—Quilapayún [Chilean folk group]