

US-led Military Coup in Venezuela Modelled on Chile, 1973?

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At this stage, "all options are on the table".

A self-proclaimed "interim president" endorsed by the "international community",

infiltration and co-optation of the Venezuelan armed forces, military intervention, Coup d'Etat,

Assassination of president Maduro,

Relentless sabotage and financial warfare, engineered hyperinflation, confiscation of Venezuelan assets,

NGO supported protest movements, co-optation of opposition groups, the funding of political dissent, social media propaganda...

The people of Venezuela will resist.

While the US for the moment is not contemplating direct military intervention, both Colombia and Brazil are slated to intervene militarily, if required, in Venezuela's border regions, doing the "dirty work" on behalf of the Pentagon:

*"Since the new year, alleged eyewitness reports, including photos, have circulated rumoring **the presence of U.S. Army helicopters and unusually large troop deployments to Panamá along the Colombian border. ...***

*General Mark Stammer, the head of US Army South, is in Bogotá to discuss border issues. Right now, the Colombian military has its largest concentrations of troops in the coca growing areas of south Colombia, and **along the border with Venezuela.***

Both areas were visited by former SouthCom commander Admiral Kurt Tidd twice last year, in February and November. One of the first acts of the new commander, Admiral Craig S. Faller, was to visit Colombia, also in November, two days after the change of command. (Venezuela analysis, January 31, 2019)

Washington is also attempting to create divisions within the Venezuelan armed forces which have remained loyal to president Maduro as well as co-opt various factions of the opposition into supporting a Coup d'Etat.

Venezuela's Defense Minister Padrino earlier confirmed that the Venezuelan Armed forces were firmly behind the president:

“As soldiers, we work for peace and not for war... Those of us who lived through the coup of 2002 have it etched into our minds, we never thought we’d see that again...”

On February 4, representatives of the Lima Group meeting in Ottawa, called upon the Venezuelan Armed Forces to pledge their support for the self-proclaimed “interim president” Juan Guaido.

Scenarios: What is on the drawing board of the Pentagon and US intelligence is to trigger a shift in the command structures of the Armed Forces with a view to fomenting a military coup. According to reports, the White House is “speaking with members of the [Venezuelan] armed forces and hoping for more defections.” ([Independent](#)).

In all likelihood, the US has already developed ongoing and tangible contacts with members of the Venezuelan military.

Venezuela vs. Chile: The September 11, 1973 Coup in Chile

Is Washington’s initiative modelled on the Coup d’Etat in Chile, September 11, 1973 which led to the assassination of president Salvador Allende and the instatement of a military Junta led by General Augusto Pinochet?

In contrast to Chile in 1973, the Venezuelan military is firmly committed to the Maduro government and the possibilities of coopting the top brass are limited in comparison to Chile in 1973. Moreover, linked to the Armed Forces is the National Bolivarian Militia, a civilian grassroots force created by Chavez in 2009. In contrast, in Chile in 1973, the grassroots civilian militia linked to the *cordones industriales* were disarmed in August 1973.

The model of US intervention in Chile bears some similarities:

- Engineered hyperinflation in the last months of the Allende government.
- Washington in 1973 was involved in coopting the Armed Forces and the parliamentary opposition.
- A reshuffle within Chile’s Armed Forces occurred barely one month before the military coup followed by the resignation of **General Carlos Prats**

In the weeks leading up the 1973 coup, US Ambassador **Nathaniel Davis** and members of the CIA held meetings with Chile’s top military brass together with the leaders of the National Party and the ultra-right nationalist front Patria y Libertad. While the undercover role of the Nixon administration is amply documented, what was rarely mentioned in media reports is the fact that the military coup was also supported by a sector of the Christian Democratic Party.

The resignation of **General Carlos Prats** who was loyal to Allende was crucial in paving the way for the September 11, 1973 coup d’Etat. Prior to General Prats resignation, a campaign was waged to disarm the civilian militia, integrated by the *cordones industriales*.

In 1973 I was Visiting Professor at the Catholic University of Chile in Santiago. In the wake of the coup, I attempted to review the chronology, focussing on divisions within the Armed Forces. The following is an excerpt from the text I wrote in the immediate wake of the September 11, 1973 military coup (emphasis added):

In August 1973, the Armed forces initiated a series of violent search and arrests directed against the MIR and state enterprises integrated by the industrial belts (cordones industriales). These searches were conducted in accordance with the Fire Arms control Act, adopted by [the Chilean] Congress after the October 1972 employers strike and which empowered the Armed Forces bypassing the civilian police authorities to implement (by Military Law) the control of fire arms. **The objective of this measure was to confiscate automatic weapons in the members of the industrial belts and curb armed resistance by civilians** to a military coup. Meanwhile, right-wing elements in the Navy and Air Force were involved in actively eliminating Allende supporters by a well organized operation of anti-government propaganda, purges and torture.

General Prats' Resignation from the Armed Forces

On August 9, Allende reorganized his cabinet and brought in the three joint chiefs of staff, **Carlos Prats (Army), Cesar Ruis Danyau (Air force) and Raul Montero (Navy)** into a so-called "**National Security Cabinet**". Allende was only intent upon resolving the Transport Strike, which was paralyzing the country's economy, he was anxious to gain whatever support was left within the Armed Forces.

The situation was not ripe for a military coup as long as General Carol Prats was member of the cabinet, commander in Chief of the Army and Chairman of the Council of Generals. Towards mid-August, the armed forces pressured Allende and demanded Prats' resignation and retirement " due to basic disagreements between Prats and the Council of Generals". Allende made a final attempt to retain Prats and invited General Prats, Pinochet, Bonilla, and others for dinner at his private residence. **Prats resigned officially on August 23**, both from the Cabinet and from the Armed Forces: "I did not want to be a factor which would threaten institutional discipline.. or serve as a pretext to those who want to overthrow the constitutional government"

The Generals' Secret Meeting

With General Carlos Prats out of the way, the road was clear for a consolidated action by the Army, Navy and Air Force. Prats successor **General Augusto Pinochet convened the Council of 24 generals in a secret meeting on August 28.** The purpose and discussion of this meeting were not made public. In all likelihood, it was instrumental in the planning of the September 11 military coup. The reshuffle of Allende's National Security Cabinet took place on the same day (28 August). It resulted after drawn out discussions with party leaders of the Unidad Popular coalition, and in particular with Socialist Party leader Carlos Altamirano.

The following day, August 29, Altamirano in a major policy speech made the following statement:

We hope that our Armed Forces have not abandoned their historical tradition, the Schneider Doctrine ... and that they could follow a course leading to the installation of a reactionary Brazilian style [military] dictatorship ... We are convinced that our armed forces are not prepared to be instrumental in the restoration of the privileges of the financial and industrial elites and landed aristocracy. We are convinced that if the Right wing golpe (coup) were to succeed, Chile would become a new Vietnam.

On the weekend preceding the military coup, leaders of the National Party and Christian Democratic Party made major political statements, declaring Allende's government illegal and unconstitutional. Sergio Onofre Jarpa of the National Party declared:

After the Marxist downfall, the rebirth of Chile! ... We will continue our struggle until we see out of office those who failed to fulfill their obligations. From this struggle, a new solidarity and a new institutional framework (institucionalidad) will emerge.

A few days later, the Presidential Palace was bombed and Allende was assassinated. The "rebirth of Chile", and a new institutional framework had emerged. ([Michel Chossudovsky, Santiago de Chile, September 1973](#))

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