

## Latin American Press Review, Program 1973-16

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Speaker 1: Welcome to Latin American Press Review, a weekly selection and analysis of important events and issues in Latin America as seen by leading world newspapers with special and emphasis on the Latin American press. This program is produced by the Latin American Policy Alternatives Group.

Speaker 2: While wiretaps, break-ins, and other acts of political espionage are being revealed in connection with the Watergate case, certain events evolving, Chilean officials raised the possibility of an entirely new dimension to the allegations against the US government. According to the New York City Police, the Manhattan home of the Chilean Ambassador to the United Nations was illegally entered in April of 1971. While a few valuables were reported missing, the ransacking of important papers and documents leads observers to believe the break-in was not an ordinary burglary.

Speaker 1: Also, at approximately the same time as the break-in at the Democratic National Headquarters in the Watergate Hotel, the Chilean embassy was illegally entered. It has been suggested that the intruders may have been looking for documents related to the Chilean expropriation of IT&T or evidence of ties between Cuba and Chile. When viewed alongside recent Watergate revelations of US government wiretaps of foreign embassies, these mysterious break-ins raised serious questions about the diplomatic techniques of the United States government. This from the Santiago Weekly, Chile oi.

Speaker 2: Latin America reports from Uruguay. In late June, president Juan Bordaberry finally succumbed to military pressure and decreed the formal death of the ailing body of Uruguay and constitutional democracy. His surrender to the military has been on the cards ever since the armed forces pressed political demands on the civilian government and forced it virtually into a junior partnership. Since then, Bordaberry and parliament, though often in conflict themselves, managed to stage something of a comeback by taking advantage of divisions within the armed forces, but the real power remained with the army. The last straw came when Congress refused a military request transmitted through Bordaberry for the parliamentary immunity of the left-wing Senator Ero to be lifted, so that he could be charged with being allegedly the civil leader of the Tupamaros, Uruguay's Urban Guerrilla Group.

Speaker 1: Senator Ero, a tireless critic of the Uruguay government, has strongly denounced the tortures and other abuses practiced by the Bordaberry regime and had become an obvious thorn in the government's side. Ero was interviewed by the Chilean Weekly Chile Oi shortly before the official military takeover. He was asked...

Speaker 2: "How would you characterize the present Uruguayan government?"

- Speaker 1: "Power is firmly in the hands of the military regardless of the appearances they maintain. Because President Bordaberry and his cabinet can draw up a decree, but they must take it to the National Security and Police Council, and if the military doesn't like it, they'll throw it in the trash."
- Speaker 2: "To what political tendency do most of the military leaders belong?"
- Speaker 1: "To the right wing? Some of them tried to disguise themselves as [inaudible 00:02:59]. Followers of the nationalistic Peruvian military, but they can't fool anyone."
- Speaker 2: Which are the most important milestones, which mark the military's rise to power in Uruguay.
- Speaker 1: Ex President Areco called the Army to intervene against the alleged sedition by revolutionary groups in September 1971. In April 1972, one day after the Tupamaros executed several members of the para police force called the Death Squad, parliament voted a state of internal siege under the pretense that there would be a coup if this measure were not taken. With this step, we say that a button was pressed to put the military on the streets, and we ask, where is the second button, which will return them to their barracks? They never returned. And so it is an irreversible act, which we must now deal with.
- Speaker 2: But the arrests of thousands of persons has produced what is called the dialectic of the barracks. Can you explain this?
- Speaker 1: The Uruguayan army has become a torturer. It commits savage tortures and assassinations, but the moment arrives when the torturer begins to realize that the prisoner is showing him an image of the country which he did not recognize before. A country full of misery, exploited dependent where a few become rich, both inside and outside of the law. Young officials began to discover that the citizens which had been persecuted were teaching them many truths, and these young officers began to investigate financial scandals, which should have jailed very influential persons. Then the army intervened to stomp these investigations. And he proceeded to imprison a money changer here, an accountant there, a customs house broker. In short, the little fishes, while the big ones remained free, the high military officers betrayed the young officials and consolidated their power.
- Speaker 2: What solution do you see for the crisis in Uruguay?
- Speaker 1: Popular mobilization. There is no army which can contain an organized and mobilized population, and our people are losing their fear. Remember that when President Bordaberry called on the people to defend the state institutions, which were crumbling, of course, he mobilized only 40 or 50 persons. On the other hand, and excuse me for referring to myself here, when the problem of my expulsion from Parliament arose, we organized a caravan through the entire capital city. We filled a municipal plaza with 20,000 persons, and the people stood overnight. Outside the legislature, it is clear popular mobilization puts a break on personal ambitions.

Speaker 2: Ero's predictions and comments turned out to have a large element of truth. His description of the armed forces has obviously been born out by recent events. However, popular mobilization in response to this has not been successful. The Miami Herald reports that the half million member National Workers Convention called a general strike to protest Bordaberry's actions and shutting down most factories and closing the port. Telephone operators refuse to accept international calls except in cases of emergency. A strike caused fuel shortages, which threatened to halt transportation. The strike stopped publication of all newspapers. The afternoon daily, Axion, was ordered to halt publication after an editorial term, the Bordaberry action a coup. The military, however, apparently had things in hand using troops to man crucial production areas such as oil. It was declared that no elections would take place until 1976.

Speaker 1: James Nelson Goodsell of the Christian Science Monitor gives a more historical analysis of these events. "The recent military actions have ended representative rule." He writes. "In a country that was once a model democracy. Uruguay traditionally has been the bulwark of parliamentary rule in Latin America. However, rampant inflation continuing strikes and lagging foreign sales have plagued the economy for several years. In political life the urban base Tupamaros upset society during the late 1960s and military intervention originally intended merely to squelch guerrilla, has unfortunately expanded." This review of events in Uruguay from Latin America, the Miami Herald Chile OI and the Christian Science Monitor.

Speaker 2: Chile OI carries a report by a North American correspondent who recently visited Nicaragua to see firsthand the aftermath of December's earthquake. His account of the corruption and misuse of the millions of dollars worth of goods donated from all over the hemisphere is harrowing. He was witness to the fact that the disaster relief destined for the victims of the earthquake never reached them. It was redirected instead to fill the bellies and line the pockets of Nicaragua's strong men, Tachito Samoja and his National Guard.

Speaker 1: The accounts tell of exclusive beaches and elegant residential neighborhoods lined with canvas tents from the United States, Canada, and Germany, while victims of the earthquake still homeless, huddle under trees are improvised cardboard lean tos. It tells us stores operating out of private homes where the merchandise comes from cartons labeled, "Care. US Aid" "From the people of the Dominican Republic to the Nicaraguan People" and so on. Canned goods, clothing, electric lanterns, water purifiers, tools, even blood transfusion units in Samsonite cases are for sale in such shops. The article notes that the transfusion units are generally valued only for the case which they come in. Other stores operate out of the residences of many members of the National Guard. These cell items sacked from the most elegant monogan doors after the guard had cordoned off a 400 block area. Anastasio Somoza III, son of the present dictator and grandson of Anastasio I, who was given control of the country by the US Marines in 1933, was in charge of this cleanup operation.

Speaker 2: The article portrays US Ambassador Shelton as Samoja's personal counselor and most unwavering ally. As a close friend and former employee of Howard Hughes and the staunch Nixon man, Shelton has a lot to offer Samoja. For instance, the \$2 million check he brought to Nicaragua from Washington after the quake has now made its way

through a shady land deal to Tachito Samoza's personal bank account. This from the Santiago Weekly, Chile OI

Speaker 1: La Paz, Mexico. President Luis Echeverría says Mexico will expand its 12-mile offshore limit to 200 miles keeping rich fishing waters out of the reach of Americans and other foreigners. An expansion by Mexico would be opposed by American tuna fishermen and other, since it would put most of Mexico's rich shrimp beds off southeast coast off limits to foreign boats.

Speaker 2: However, Mexico's move represents an increasing tendency among underdeveloped nations to claim a 200 mile rather than 12-mile sovereignty over resource-rich ocean space along their borders. Even nations such as Iceland and Australia traditionally allied with the United States and Europe have broken with the big powers on this issue. This from the Miami Herald.

Speaker 1: The Miami Herald reports from Buenos Aires. Foreign businessmen and their families are quietly leaving Argentina in substantial numbers in the face of a wave of kidnapping and extortion that has frightened the entire business community of this country. Sources within the American business community here estimate that 50 American families have left already and others are preparing to go.

Speaker 2: Numerous guerrilla organizations have made it quite clear that foreign capital is not wanted in the country. They have been very successful at bloodless kidnappings and have won some popular support by forcing US companies to pay ransom in the form of donations to slum projects, poor areas and hospitals.

Speaker 1: Contrary to original reports of the bloody shootout last week at Ezeiza Airport in Buenos Aires, it now appears that the violence was initiated by right wing Peronist. The shooting which killed 20 and injured 200 of a massive crowd awaiting the arrival of Juan Peron was originally blamed on the youth wing of the Peronist movement. According to the London publication Latin America, however, evidence is mounting, which shows that the shooting was begun by members of the rightist general labor confederation and was directed at Peronist youth columns in the crowd.

Speaker 2: At a recent meeting, the Organization of American States survived some vehement criticisms and emerged relatively unscathed. Argentinian diplomats reflecting the new leftist Argentinian regime objected strongly to the exclusion of Cuba from the discussions. It was also suggested that the Organization of American states be replaced by a new and specifically Latin American body. Such sentiments have also been voiced by Peru.

Speaker 1: However, the United States still has several strong supporters on the continent. Brazil and Bolivia proved their allegiance by warning against destruction of the organization of American states. Nevertheless, even they could not agree with the US ambassador's speech, which claimed that the Organization of American States successfully served to avoid domination by any one member. This from the British News Weekly, Latin America.

Speaker 2: Latin America reports on recent political and economic developments between Brazil and Africa. Brazil's booming economy is leading it to seek markets while supplies, and commodity agreements with certain African nations. While Brazilian diplomats are experiencing some success here, there are delicate political problems concerning Brazilian Portuguese ties. Portugal, the only remaining European power to hold outright colonies has been battling growing liberation movements in recent years. Brazil, a former colony itself, won its independence peacefully in the 19th century, largely because of Napoleonic Wars racking the European continent. Now, Brazil seems to have eclipsed its mother country economically, but politically the two remain on the same level. Both countries are ruled by extremely repressive dictatorships.

Speaker 1: Some members of the African Independence Movement fear actual military involvement by Brazil and Guinea-Bissau, the colony in which Portugal seems closest to military defeat. They report that Brazilian officers in Portuguese uniforms were detected in Guinea and Cabo Verde last November. Further evidence was provided by opposition groups in Portugal who reported on conversations between Brazilian officers and the Portuguese authorities in Lisbon. One concrete suggestion is believed to have been that Brazil and Portugal should establish a joint naval base in the Cabo Verde. This from the British News Weekly, Latin America.

Speaker 2: There is still very little detailed information concerning a recent coup attempt in Chile. According to a brief Miami Herald report, however, several low ranking members of the military were responsible for the coup attempt. They were arrested by pro constitution officers. The commander of the Santiago Province said the plot had been totally aborted. He declined to say whether civilians were involved in the plot. This from the Miami Herald.

Speaker 1: Dictatorship in Bolivia may possibly be diminishing, reports Latin America. So-called President Hugo Banzer caught observers by surprise last weekend by announcing that the process of returning Bolivia to constitutional rule would begin next year. He said the concrete measures required to implement this proposal would be announced during the coming months, and that in the meantime, he would appoint a commission to study modifications to the country's electoral law. Such modifications would ensure that the law would be appropriate to the present time and to the interests of the nation.

Speaker 2: Politicians were cheered by the announcement and seemed to have taken Banzer's somewhat vague timetable for elections to mean that they would be held next year. In fact, sources close to Banzer believe he has area intention of staying where he is for the next three years or so in order to consolidate what he regards as his particular achievements.

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political shift taking place. President Salvador Allende is moving towards less military participation in his government after revolt and attempt attempted coup by several low ranking rightist officers. About 100 members of the second armed regiment assaulted the defense ministry and presidential palace with tanks and automatic weapons. The gunfire killed 22 and wounded 34 other people, mostly civilians.

Although the revolt was easily squelched with the aid of the higher ranking military who feel a commitment to defend the Constitution, Allende decided to form a new cabinet without the participation of the armed forces. Much of the political tension leading up to this crisis arose from the controversial strike of the copper miners at Chile's biggest mine. The strike lasted 76 days and cost Chile an estimated \$60 million in lost production. Strike related violence also cost two lives and resulted in injuries to more than 100 persons. There was a great deal of controversy over the way the Allende regime professing a socialist ideology should handle disputes with their constituency, the workers. Related to this was debate over the validity of the miner's claims. While critics such as Hugo Blanco, well known South American revolutionary writing for Intercontinental Press Service, supported the minor's claims, others have been severely critical of what they term elitist demands.

In a recent interview, David Barkin of the City College of New York questioned fellow economist Andrew Zimbalist. Zimbalist recently returned from Chile where he had been working with a government planning agency, effectively points out some of the difficulties and sides with the government. Subsequent to this interview, the minors did in fact accept a government settlement and have returned to work. However, the Chilean economy has been severely damaged. In the following interview, Zimbalist and Barkan examined the reasons for the strike as well as its political implications. This interview comes to us from Chilean newsletter produced by the What's Happening in Chile Group in New York City.

Speaker 3: We've been reading a lot in the New York Times about the Chilean labor problems and especially the strike at El Teniente copper mine, one of the largest copper mines in the world. Most especially, we've read about a lot of violence and the fact that copper exports from Chile have been stopped because of these events. Could you comment on the coverage of those events by the New York Times and tell us a little more about what's happening?

Speaker 4: Sure. True to form, the New York Times has succeed in completely distorting the events at this of the copper Strike. The two articles that I read this past week on the strike failed to mention what seems to me to be the most fundamental aspects. One, that it is a strike instigated by the right. Two, that the demands that the right are raising are completely illegitimate, which is to say that they're asking for that the workers of El Teniente receive a 150% readjustment for the rate of inflation when all the other workers in the country are receiving 100%. And this would be to make the most privileged sector of workers in Chile, even more privileged. The government has, and is one of the first governments to do this in Chile, guaranteed a 100% to everybody, so nobody is hurt by inflation. The right has taken advantage of this and is trying to claim that the workers at El Teniente should get 150%, an outrageous demand not justifiable on any terms. The New York Times article did not mention this.

The other thing, and perhaps even more egregious, that the New York Times article did not mention is that today only 20% of the workers at El Teniente are on strike. 80% are working. And the workers that are on strike are workers that are in the opposition to the government. They're administrative workers, they're white collar workers, and they're not the blue collar workers. Even though the New York Times article says that this is creating a conflict between the government and the blue collar workers of the country.

Speaker 3: The fact that it's the white collar workers that are on strike, that makes the current episode very strikingly similar to the episode last October when the truck drivers were on strike and the New York Press or the United States Press in general made it seem like it was a worker strike, when in fact it was owners of the trucks which initiated the strike, which was taking place in Chile. Is the parallel correct in looking at the current event in light of what happened last October, and can you tell us a little about why the right has chosen the copper mines as the object of their strike?

Speaker 4: The parallel is the following that the right in October for 30 days orchestrated a general strike. The strike was a failure because it didn't have worker support. 99% of the white and blue collar workers in the country were working. The right this time around, more determined than ever, has decided that the only way they're going to get a general strike to work is to divide the working class, and they're trying to do that by using those sectors of the white collar workers where they have some support to support a political strike, and this is what they're doing. They've tried to do that at El Teniente and they succeeded to some extent. They tried to do it at Chuquicamata, which is the other large copper mine in the north and other copper mines. In fact, labor leaders of El Teniente traveled several hundred miles to these other mines to try to instigate these strikes. They failed. They're also trying, of course, to do it in other industrial sectors, but to date have also failed. Now the second part of your question was related to-

Speaker 3: Why have they chosen the mines themselves as the object?

Speaker 4: The other part of their strategy having a general strike is to affect the sector of the economy that is most vital to the economy. Copper accounts for 80% of the export earnings of Chile, or 80% of the dollars that Chile earns comes from copper. And El Teniente incidentally produces something of 50% of the copper in the country, a little bit less perhaps. Now, Chile doesn't have the dollars to import the raw materials and the imports they need for production, and they need a lot of them because their industry has to date or up until the end, they've been based upon foreign capital and foreign technology and to service that technology, they need inputs that aren't producing the country. So if they don't have the dollars to buy those input and if they don't have the dollars to buy the food that's necessary to feed the population and other items, then the economy approaches chaos, and this is what the right is trying to do.

They're trying to create the situation of chaos to justify a military intervention which would supersede Allende. Now, there's no indication at the present that the military is disposed to do this, but the right goes ahead with the strategy of creating more and more chaos. This general strike has cost Chile some 30 million in dollars, in foreign exchange earnings. If the strike continues, it will cost them more if they generate

sympathy strikes in other parts of the country amongst the white collar workers who are already in the opposition, and I should point out that somewhat around 20% of the workers in Chile are in the opposition to the government, and these workers almost universally turn out to be white collar workers, and the blue collar workers in almost a hundred percent of them are supporting the government.

So if the right does succeed in dividing the workers, some of the white collars from the mass of the workers, and continues to generate the sabotage, then they are hoping that the situation will call for a military intervention saying that the situation is unsalvageable in any other way. And this would of course usurp Allende's powers.

Speaker 3: These sorts of economic problems which are being generated by a small segment of the labor force must be having repercussions throughout the rest of the country. Could you comment on that a little?

Speaker 4: Well, as I say, they've tried, they've gone to the other mines, they've gone to other industries. They're generating other sorts of economic chaos from the black market, controlling distribution mechanisms. In fact, at El Teniente, as a means of sabotage, they've blockaded the road to the mines for the workers. The 80% that want to work have been blockaded. They've been terrorized. They've in fact blown up several factories. A factory in Concepcion that was completely destroyed. They've intercepted distribution of industrial inputs. They intercepted, for example, during the strike of October, which was the planting season in Chile. They intercepted the distribution of seed and fertilizers, which lowered the agricultural production this year, and of course, food is a basic item, and there's no better way to make people revolt against the government than to starve them. Now, they haven't succeeded fortunately in doing that, but the strategy is to raise the level of the sabotage and raise the level of the disturbance so that there would be no other alternative but to have a military intervention.

Speaker 3: When you talk about this industrial sabotage and problems of the white collar workers, you're talking about a very special echelon of the labor force. What about the other groups, the large members of blue collar workers, the rest of the labor force, which is in fact trying to fight this? We read about conflicts between the workers and we read even about workers being killed. Could you comment about that in the light of this?

Speaker 4: Well, the only thing to say is that the great majority, the great great majority, and it has to be over 95% of the blue collar workers are supporting the government. Several months ago, there was a march in favor of the government and from the headquarters of the Christian Democratic Party, which is an opposition party, came some shots and killed a blue collar worker. Methods of terrorism. They'll resort to anything to try to divide workers, to scare workers. And I would say that it's going to be very hard for them to divide the blue collar workers, very hard for them to take them away from supporting the government.

Speaker 3: This must be causing substantial sacrifices. Then for the blue collar workers. I mean it's substantial problem for them specifically, if they're being prevented from going to their work at the mines, for example.

Speaker 4: At El Teniente there are serious problems. On the whole, everybody's experiencing more problems than Chile, but we can say without hesitation that the blue collar workers today in Chile are eating much, much better. They're consuming 20% more. They have better housing, they have better facilities, better plumbing, electricity where they haven't had it before. They have medical centers in the factories, they have dental centers in the factories, they have libraries, they have cultural groups. In short, they have everything. They have a lot of things that they never had before and very satisfied.

Speaker 3: Nevertheless, the present crisis does add up to a great many political problems for the Allende government. To what extent is there any external participation in this current political crisis, this Chilean play of power, and is the United States involved in any way in this internal power play?

Speaker 4: Yeah, it's very hard to see the CIA. There is indirect evidence that they're doing something. For instance, during the general strike of October, curiously, a very large amount of dollars entered the country that wasn't accounted for either by increasing exports or by loans or whatever. And one noticed this because the exchange rate for the dollar or the dollar in relationship to the escudo became much less valuable, and that only happens through the situation of supply and demand when you have more dollars. And it was very clear then that the United States or somebody, some conduit was funneling dollars to support the strike, to support the truckers in October, the same thing is happening now. There are sorts then of this indirect evidence, but we know more directly that in Bolivia there are Brazilian and Bolivian troops mounting on the Chilean border, at which point or if they'll ever intervene, if they'll ever invade Chile, we don't know, but they're preparing to do that. We don't know if they would initiate a conflict or jump in once a conflict had been started.

Speaker 3: One last short question, and that is these international and in internal political events which are occurring in Chile leave most of us in America in a quandary. How do we get the sort of information or how can we reinterpret the sort of information that is available in such a way that would permit us to understand better what's happening in Chile? Are there any sources of news outside the United States which might be available here? For example, the European Press. Is the European press reporting it differently and better?

Speaker 4: Well, I'm living in Chile. I'm not all that familiar with the European Press. There are papers like Le Monde, which are in French, that report better, of course. But I can say that in New York City, there's The Guardian. And there's very good coverage in The Guardian. There's good coverage in the nation. I understand, of course, that's not a daily paper. I would say for weekly reports on Chile, The Guardian is fine.

Speaker 3: Thank you very much. We've been speaking with Andrew Zimbalist, who is in from Chile, where he's been working on problems of economic development in the present government of Salvador Allende.

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