

“We Can Get a Coup”: Warren Nutter and the Overthrow of Salvador Allende

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Abstract: In 1969, Warren Nutter left the University of Virginia Department of Economics to serve as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs in the Nixon administration. During his time in the Defense Department, Nutter was deeply involved in laying the groundwork for a military coup against the democratically elected president of Chile, Salvador Allende. Although Nutter left the Pentagon several months before the successful 1973 coup, his role in the ascendance of the Pinochet regime was far more direct than the better-known cases of Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, James Buchanan, and Arnold Harberger. This paper describes Nutter’s role in Chile policy planning and generating a “coup climate.” It shows how Nutter’s criticisms of Henry Kissinger are grounded in his economics, and compares and contrasts Nutter with other economists who have been connected to Pinochet’s dictatorship.

Introduction

Warren Nutter is best known as an expert on the Soviet economy (Nutter, 1957; 1958; 1962; 1969; Engerman, 2009; Levy and Peart, 2015a; Levy and Peart, 2016), a major player in the development of the “Virginia School” of political economy (Breit, 1987; Levy and Peart, 2015b), and a key contributor to the Chicago approach to monopoly and competition (Nutter, 1951; Van Horn, 2009; Cherrier, 2011; Schleisser, 2012). He was Milton Friedman’s first graduate student at the University of Chicago and worked closely with James Buchanan at the University of Virginia in the 1950s and 1960s.² Although not as well-known as his Nobel laureate teachers and collaborators, Nutter was a vital contributor to several fields of economics and to mid-twentieth century neoliberal thought. More recently, Nutter has received attention for his role in the Thomas Jefferson Center’s reaction to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (MacLean, 2017; Fleury and Marciano, 2018; Kuehn, 2018, and Magness, Carden, and Geloso, 2019). Kuehn (2018) in particular explores the distinctive role Nutter played in the reaction to *Brown* and presents new archival evidence of his involvement in the Charlottesville private school movement during the battle over school desegregation.

¹ Acknowledgements: This paper benefited significantly from comments on earlier drafts from Andrew Farrant, Peter Kornbluh, and David Levy. I am grateful to Matheus Grasselli for help with Portuguese translation. I am grateful for Jenny Fichmann’s assistance with the G. Warren Nutter Papers at the Hoover Institution Archives, for Mary Curry’s assistance with the Digital National Security Archives, and for the library staff’s assistance with the William J. Baroody Papers at the Library of Congress. This research was not supported by funding and was conducted independent of my work at the Urban Institute.

² Although Friedman supervised the dissertation, Nutter began his research under Henry Simons, was strongly influenced by Frank Knight (Brady, 2010), and received considerable support and direction on his dissertation from Aaron Director (Van Horn, 2013). Nutter was therefore firmly embedded in the Chicago tradition at the inflection point between Old and New Chicago.

Nutter was political as well. Barry Goldwater brought him into the inner circle of his 1964 presidential campaign to advise on policy and draft some of the candidate's most important speeches. Rumors suggested that Nutter would have been tapped to chair Goldwater's Council of Economic Advisors.³ Goldwater lost spectacularly, but when Richard Nixon was elected in 1968, Nutter was nominated and confirmed to serve as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (ASD-ISA). This is a widely known chapter of his life, but it is understudied and dramatically underappreciated. Nutter was an important figure in the conservative movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In his account of the early years of the Nixon administration, Garry Wills identified Nutter (along with Milton Friedman and Harry Jaffa) as the intellectual element which "was the most useful, that which most *united* the right" (Wills, 1970, p. 556, emphasis in the original). But whatever role Friedman and Jaffa played as public intellectuals for the conservative coalition, it was Nutter who stalked the halls of Nixon's White House and collaborated with Henry Kissinger in the Situation Room.

This paper explores Nutter's time in the Nixon administration, and specifically his role in formulating US Chile policy from 1970 through early 1973. Nutter has been completely neglected in the literature on the entanglement of neoliberal economists with Chile, but declassified federal documents show that he was deeply involved in planning for the overthrow of Salvadore Allende. Allende was a popular Marxist politician who worked throughout his career for a democratic path to Communism. In the 1970 presidential election, Allende ran against Jorge Alessandri (Independent) and Radomiro Tomic (Christian Democrat) and won a plurality of the September 4th popular vote, triggering a ratification vote in the Congress on October 24th. Although ratification votes were usually only a formality certifying the candidate winning a plurality of the popular vote, the ratification vote in 1970 commanded the attention of opponents of Allende in the US government, including Warren Nutter. In addition to the broader threat posed by a second Communist state in the Western Hemisphere, Allende directly challenged US corporate interests in Chile by threatening to nationalize the copper industry.

Nutter was most active in Chile policymaking during the last quarter of 1970. On October 14th, 1970, Henry Kissinger requested that Nutter and Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard draft recommendations on Allende for President Nixon's consideration. Nutter and Packard's options paper included a recommendation to initiate a military coup to "overthrow Allende," in addition to other confrontational measures. By November, 1970, Nixon and Kissinger conceded that an immediate coup was unrealistic, so Nutter and others on the national security team turned their attention to cultivating what Thomas Karamessines, CIA Deputy Director for Plans, called a "coup climate." Cultivating a coup climate included restricting credit to Chile, providing arms and training to the Chilean military, and strengthening ties with right-wing military dictatorships in neighboring countries – all activities that Nutter was personally involved in over the next several years.

³ See Nutter to Tullock, July 10th, 1964, in Box 95, Folder 21, Gordon Tullock Papers, Hoover Institution for Nutter's role in drafting Goldwater's platform speech for the 1964 Republican convention. See Edwards (2017, pp. 96-97) for Nutter's role in jointly drafting Goldwater's famous Republican nomination acceptance speech with Harry Jaffa. See "Nutter Seen as Choice of Goldwater" (1964) for rumors about the CEA position.

Warren Nutter's role in the story of Chile differs on at least two dimensions from the better known cases of Friedrich Hayek (Farrant, McPhail, and Berger, 2012; Meadowcroft and Ruger, 2014; Farrant and McPhail, 2014; Caldwell and Montes, 2015; Farrant and McPhail, 2017), Milton Friedman (Valdés, 1995; Schliesser, 2010; Montes, 2015), Arnold Harberger (Valdés, 1995), and James Buchanan (Fischer, 2009; MacLean, 2017; Farrant and Tarko, 2019; Farrant, 2019). First, Nutter was involved in the planning to undermine and overthrow Allende, but he was not directly involved in subsequent dealings with Pinochet's brutal regime. In contrast, Hayek, Friedman, Harberger, and Buchanan have all been accused of providing some degree of aid and comfort to the junta itself. This difference does not imply that Nutter's actions were less serious – quite the opposite is true, in fact. It is simply to say that the time frame and principal actors relevant to the case of Warren Nutter differ. The second dimension of difference is that while the anti-democratic impulses of Hayek were relatively qualified and academic, Warren Nutter actively worked against democratic processes in Chile. Quasi-sophisticated theories proposing “liberal dictatorship” as a potential second-best solution – like those of Hayek⁴ – played no role in US policymaking or in Nutter's own arguments. His recommendations and decisions were grounded in anti-Communism and Cold War strategy.

This paper begins by describing Warren Nutter's arrival at the Pentagon and his relationship with Henry Kissinger. Nixon's foreign policy revolved around Henry Kissinger, so Nutter's reflections on Kissinger are fundamental for understanding the two men's collaboration in the overthrow of Allende. The next section of the paper details Nutter's contributions to Chile policy during the frantic months of October and November, 1970, when the Nixon administration was grappling with Allende's impending presidency. After recounting these events, the paper reviews the slower work of cultivating a “coup climate,” with particular emphasis on Nutter's role in providing arms to the Chilean military and his 1971 tour of Latin America. The final section of the paper contrasts Nutter's role in Chile with that of Friedman, Harberger, Buchanan, and Hayek.

Warren Nutter at the Pentagon

Warren Nutter learned that he was being considered for a position in the Nixon administration in December, 1968, following a period of intense scrutiny of the Thomas Jefferson Center. After several years of bruising allegations of ideological bias by the Ford Foundation, faculty colleagues, and the UVA administration (Levy and Peart, 2015b; MacLean, 2017), Nutter's problems were compounded when an attractive job offer from UCLA fell through in February, 1968. Working for Nixon would have offered welcome relief from the suspicions that built up around him in Charlottesville. His selection as ASD-ISA was announced publicly in February, 1969, and lauded by conservative South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond on the Senate floor. Evans and Novak

⁴ Hayek and Buchanan (and for that matter, Friedman and Harberger) are not interchangeable in their views on democracy and dictatorship. Hayek discussed the potential preferability of a “liberal” dictator to an illiberal unlimited democracy. Buchanan offered an *apparently* similar defense of constitutionally enshrined non-democratic decision making as an alternative to “unlimited” democracy. But Buchanan did not consider unlimited democracy to be a real-world problem requiring a non-democratic solution (Farrant and Tarko, 2018). Hayek, in contrast to Buchanan, saw unlimited democracy lurking behind every corner.

(1969) wrote in their reporting on Nutter's selection that the ASD-ISA was "probably the third-most-important job at the Pentagon below secretary and deputy secretary."⁵

Nutter was not Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird's first choice to lead ISA. He was only identified after Goldwater raised objections to the initial selection of Paul Nitze (Hunt, 2015). Although it is not clear whether Goldwater requested Nutter as an alternative to Nitze, it was well known that Nutter had been an important figure in his 1964 campaign and that his devotion to Goldwater was unflinching. Goldwater held Nutter in high esteem as well, referring to him as "one of the most outstanding economists that ever lived in this country."⁶

Although Goldwater may have intervened, Laird and Nutter required no introduction. Laird already knew Nutter from the 1964 Republican National Convention. In 1964 Laird was a powerful Republican Congressman and chairman of the convention's platform committee. Nutter was on the campaign trail and drafted portions of Goldwater's platform speech and his acceptance speech (Van Atta, 2008). Several months before the convention, Laird requested background material from Nutter on Soviet growth estimates to include in one of his speeches. Laird was therefore acquainted with and sympathetic to Nutter's insights several years before becoming Secretary of Defense.⁷ Nixon or his staff may also have had some role in Nutter's appointment. The president famously gave Secretary Laird complete autonomy in Pentagon staffing decisions, an extraordinarily unusual gesture (Van Atta, 2008). However, Nutter served on Nixon's Foreign Affairs Advisory Group during the 1968 campaign, so Nixon or someone on Nixon's staff may have influenced Laird's choice. Two of Nutter's colleagues on that advisory group went on to serve as ambassadors to Argentina, and one followed Nutter as ASD-ISA. However Nutter came to Laird's attention, he clearly had many friends and admirers in high places in 1968.⁸

From day one, Nutter's ISA was under considerable public scrutiny because of the stature that the office acquired during Robert McNamara's tenure as Secretary of Defense. Sheehan (1969) suggested that under McNamara the ISA had "as much influence in shaping foreign policy as the State Department," but worried that under Nutter the once vaunted office was "dissolving." In addition to downsizing the role of ISA, Nutter was expected to be a hawk in the mold of Goldwater. He "had a well-developed reputation as a hardliner" (Sheehan, 1969), and was "one of Barry Goldwater's brain-trusters" (Stone, 1969). Even conservative allies like Evans and Novak (1969) agreed that Nutter was a "hard-line cold warrior whose views are infinitely closer to the uniformed

⁵ See Knudsen to Nutter, December 2, 1968, Box 79, Folder 11 of the William J. Baroody Papers at the Library of Congress for Nutter being informed of the Nixon administration's interest in hiring him. See the William J. Baroody Papers, Box 79, Folder 10 for extensive documentation of the investigations of the department's ideological bias. For the UCLA job offer, see Allen to Nutter, February 21st, 1968, Box 79, Folder 11 of the William J. Baroody Papers. See "Ex-Goldwater Aide is Being Considered for Defense Post" (1969) for the public announcement. For Senator Thurmond, see "Dr. G. Warren Nutter—An Excellent Choice," Congressional Record, 91st Congress, 1st session, 1969, vol. 115, pt. 5:5637–5670.

⁶ For Nutter's views of Goldwater, see Nutter to Baroody, May 9, 1966, William J. Baroody Papers, Library of Congress, Box 79, Folder 10. For Goldwater on Nutter, see Record of the Senate, May 23rd, 1983.

⁷ For Laird's request for information on Soviet growth, see Nutter to Baroody, February 10, 1964, William J. Baroody Papers, Library of Congress, Box 79, folder 10.

⁸ See note 3 for Nutter's work at the 1964 RNC convention. For Nutter's participation in Foreign Affairs Advisory Group, see memo from Hill to Nixon, October 30, 1968, Richard Nixon Presidential Library White House Files Special Files Collection, Box 39, Folder 10.

military than [James R.] Schlesinger,” another economist who was a candidate for the job. According to one critical colleague on the National Security Council (NSC), Nutter saw ISA as “protectors of the interests and positions of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,” rather than as an independent policy shop.⁹

Richard Ware, who was at ISA with Nutter from 1969 to 1970, had a more sympathetic understanding of what Nutter was trying to accomplish. Ware recalled that “[d]uring a buildup in Vietnam from 60,000 to 268,000, President Johnson met only twice with his Army chief of staff. Laird and Nutter did not intend to repeat or continue this policy” (Ware, 1984, pg. 398).¹⁰ Although Nutter’s approach to ISA was clearly inconsistent with McNamara’s, it meshed well with Laird’s vision. Speculation in the press that Nutter’s appointment was intended to emasculate ISA thus oversimplified his approach to the Defense bureaucracy, the array of challenges that the Nixon administration faced, and the missteps inherited from Lyndon Johnson.

Nutter was Laird’s “confidant” (Duscha, 1969) and he was charged with overseeing Laird’s signature policy of “Vietnamization,” or the transfer of responsibilities from the US military to the South Vietnamese. Laird worked closely with Nutter during daily Vietnamization briefings that lasted up to two hours each morning (Duscha, 1971; Daadler et al., 1998). Nutter played a leading role in negotiating the release and return of American prisoners of war. He was involved in many other aspects of the war as well, including the invasion of Laos and Cambodia and the decision to carpet bomb enemy territory. Speaking of one bombing mission, Nutter joked that “the B-52s will be bumper to bumper.”¹¹

To a large extent, Vietnamization landed in Nutter’s portfolio because of the importance of military assistance to turning the war over to the South Vietnamese. Although the State Department was responsible for setting the broad parameters of military assistance policy, day to day management of the program had been a function of ISA since the Eisenhower administration. “Military assistance” included arms grants, arms sales, and foreign military training.¹² Even when allies purchased arms commercially, ISA was involved with export license decisions. Military assistance changed considerably in the years before Nutter’s arrival, from a program dominated by grants to European allies in the early 1960s to one dominated by sales to non-European militaries by the end of the decade. Prior to Nutter’s confirmation, military assistance responsibilities had been

⁹ Schlesinger was a colleague of Nutter’s at the UVA economics department until 1963 and a future Secretary of Defense and Energy. He was an expert on the economics of defense (e.g. Schlesinger 1960, 1968) and provided feedback on drafts of Nutter’s (1962) *Growth of Industrial Production in the Soviet Union*. The interpretation of ISA as “protectors” was provided by Morton Halperin to Geoffrey Piller (1983). Halperin was a member of Nixon’s NSC, but was held in deep suspicion by Nixon as a secret enemy of the president.

¹⁰ In 1983 Ware wrote to Warren Nutter’s widow, Jane, about ISA’s “image problem,” possibly in reference to the recent article by Geoffrey Piller accusing Nutter of being a protector of the interests of the Joint Chiefs. The Richard Ware papers containing the letter to Jane Nutter are restricted until 2035, so no further details on the content of the letter are available. See the description of Ware’s letter to Nutter, 1983, Box 9, in the Richard A. Ware Papers Finding Aid, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

¹¹ For Nutter on B-52s, see “Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting,” May 10th, 1972, Document 145 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume VIII, Vietnam, January-October, 1972*.

¹² When “military assistance” was used to describe a specific program the term typically referred to the material grant program, but the term “military assistance” was also used more generally to describe the broader package of assistance to foreign militaries, including military sales and training.

spread across several different offices in the Pentagon. These activities were consolidated in March, 1969, immediately after Nutter's arrival, with further reorganization and reform in August, 1971. One motivation for consolidation under Nutter was inter-departmental competition with the State Department, which Defense perceived as encroaching on their authority. Defense felt that relations with the State Department on military assistances "leave much to be desired and are a continuing cause for concern."¹³

Nutter also confronted significant Congressional skepticism of military assistance, particularly assistance to Latin America. Congress imposed special restrictions on Latin America including a ceiling of \$100 million on all military assistance to the region – the only region to have a ceiling built into the Foreign Assistance Act (Einaudi et al., 1973). At a July, 1969, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Western Hemisphere Subcommittee hearing, Senator Frank Church asked Nutter and Assistant Secretary of State Charles Meyer why the US should assist military regimes in their fights with insurgent groups. "Why shouldn't they be subverted?," Church asked. Senator Church's inquiries dogged the Pentagon and the US intelligence community for years, most notably in the 1975 Church Committee hearings on intelligence abuses in Chile and elsewhere.¹⁴

Despite these challenges, military assistance was "a key instrument in carrying out the Nixon Doctrine" in the eyes of Nutter and the Pentagon. The Nixon Doctrine held that while the US would guarantee a security umbrella for allies confronting a nuclear power, in all other cases US allies would bear the primary responsibility for their own defense. Providing allies with arms was a way to facilitate their independence. On August 28th, 1970, Warren Nutter expounded on military assistance policy for a plenary session of the Western Economic Association on "National Defense and the Economy." Military assistance and sales "assume new importance as we implement the Nixon Doctrine," Nutter stated. He added that military assistance relieved budget pressures on the Pentagon, because "[i]n some areas where American forces are now stationed, we can increasingly realize substantial savings by exchanging military assistance for manpower."¹⁵

Nutter also served on the NSC's Senior Review Group (SRG), an interdepartmental body assigned to review and refine recommendations before they were sent to the NSC or the president. The SRG

¹³ For the origin of ISA's role in military assistance, see Christenson (2014). For transformation of military assistance over the 1960s, see "Report of MAAG/MISSION/MILGROUP Reductions," undated; for 1969 reorganization, see "DSAA Role in Security Assistance," undated; for 1971 reorganization see Department of Defense Directive 5105.38, August 11, 1971; for poor relations with State, see "Security Assistance Program," undated, all documents in Box 3, Folder 15, File 18 of the G. Warren Nutter Papers at the Hoover Institution Archives.

¹⁴ n.b., the lead author of Einaudi et al. (1973), Luigi Einaudi, was the grandson of the second Italian president and Mont Pelerin Society member of the same name. See "U.S. is Reviewing Latin Arms Help" (1969) for Frank Church's questioning of Nutter and Assistant Secretary of State Meyer. For the Church Committee report, see "Covert Action in Chile 1963-1973." 1975, Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.

¹⁵ For military assistance as a "key instrument" see the memo "DSAA Role in Security Assistance," undated, Box 3, Folder 15, File 18 of the G. Warren Nutter Papers at the Hoover Institution Archives. For details on the Nixon Doctrine, see Richard Nixon's November 3rd, 1969 "Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam." For Nutter's Western Economic Association address, see Western Economic Association Forty-Fifth Annual Conference Preliminary Program," *Economic Inquiry*, March 1970 and republished in "Defense International Security Chief Discusses Risks of Future Cuts," *Army Research and Development Newsmagazine*. Washington, DC: HQ Department of the Army. 11(6): September-October, 1970. Elsewhere Nutter refers to the Nixon Doctrine as the "Guam Doctrine," because Nixon first introduced the basic concepts of the doctrine in a 1969 speech in Guam.

assignment brought Nutter out of the sprawling hallways of the Pentagon and across the Potomac River to frequent meetings in the White House. As an SRG member, he worked closely with Henry Kissinger, the National Security Advisor and undisputed master of Nixon's foreign policy machine.¹⁶ Nutter and Kissinger crossed paths at least once before their time in the Nixon administration. They served on a panel together at a classified Navy symposium on "War in the Nuclear Age" in 1958. Sherman Kent, a CIA representative attending the symposium, wrote in a memorandum that Nutter's impact was modest because his "delivery suffered by comparison" with Kissinger's and because of "audience fatigue." An agenda for the event shows that Nutter was the only thing standing between the 130 attendees and their lunch.¹⁷

In addition to the SRG, Nutter served on the secretive 40 Committee. The 40 Committee was set up by Nixon through National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) 40 in February, 1970, to approve and oversee covert operations. Most of Nutter's work on Chile occurred in the context of the SRG and the 40 Committee. The NSC has declassified almost eight hours of transcripts spanning seven SRG meetings on Chile where Nutter was present. Timestamps are not reported for 40 Committee meetings, although transcript lengths suggest these were shorter than the typical SRG meeting. Nutter's performances in these meetings made a lasting impression on Thomas Moorer, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Over a decade later, Moorer recalled that,

"Warren would sit in these meetings paying close attention and saying little until the final wrap-up. At that time he would express in the most succinct and, in my view, sound terms the factors involved and the best course of action to follow."
(Moorer, 1982)

Kissinger was present at all of the SRG and 40 Committee meetings on Chile that have been declassified and that were attended by Nutter. Understanding Nutter's perspective on Kissinger – aside from being intrinsically interesting – is therefore fundamental for understanding how he fit into Chile policy. Fortunately, Nutter provided detailed reflections on Kissinger in his 1975 paper *Kissinger's Grand Design*. Kissinger is typically cast as a hard-nosed proponent of *Realpolitik* who challenged the dangerous idealism of the post-war foreign policy establishment. Nutter focused on a different facet of the man, presenting Kissinger as an idealist in his own way.¹⁸ He described Kissinger as having an almost romantic vision of diplomacy conducted at a personal level between elite statesman capable of achieving grand outcomes through their own will and strategy.

This was not an original assessment of Kissinger by any means. Kissinger's idealization of the unilateral diplomat was perhaps most famously on display in his 1972 interview with Oriano Fallaci, during which Kissinger compared himself to a cowboy riding alone into the sunset. Nutter

¹⁶ Prior to coming to Washington, Nutter knew and corresponded with Kissinger's predecessor, the economist W.W. Rostow. Rostow was one of the few members of the policy establishment that concurred with Nutter's assessment that the Soviet economy was much weaker than estimated by other analysts. See Rostow to Nutter, October 22nd, 1966, William J. Baroody Papers, Library of Congress, Box 79, Folder 10.

¹⁷ For Kent's thoughts on Nutter see "Memorandum for Chairman of the Board CH/E," June 11th, 1958, CIA FOIA Document Number CIA-RDP79S01057A000200010005-2. For the event's agenda, see Dulles to Gates, May 27th, 1958, CIA FOIA Document Number CIA-RDP80B01676R001200140023-1.

¹⁸ c.f. Niall Ferguson's 2015 biography, which also argues for Kissinger's idealism.

argued that Kissinger's romantic attitude tainted his relationship with the institutions of government. He wrote that,

“Institutions do not attract Kissinger's attention, for history looms personified before him. There is no evidence of strong interest on his part in comprehending American institutions, their evolution, the forces they exert, or the governmental processes consistent with them.” (Nutter, 1975, p. 27)

Even when Kissinger considered the less personal case of “institutional diplomacy,” Nutter contends that he only used it as a foil to contrast with his preferred style of personal diplomacy. In the case of institutional diplomacy Kissinger “does not have in mind the nature of the process but the relations being developed” between two institutional actors (Nutter, 1975, p. 28). What Kissinger lacked, Nutter argued, was an appreciation for the constraints and preferences of political and bureaucratic actors and the institutional framework undergirding individual policymakers' choices. Kissinger studied and taught government at Harvard and Nutter speculated that,

“Perhaps limited exposure to the subject of economics helps explain this cast of mind. The economist thinks in terms of scarce means, competing uses (values), substitutability and complementarity of goods, comparative advantage, optimal mixes of goods—all quantitative concepts involving more or less of things, not all or nothing. He also reasons stochastically and defines concepts through frequency distributions. Above all, he attributes the unfolding state of affairs more to the operation of impersonal forces than to the activities of specific individuals.” (Nutter, 1975, p. 27)

In other words, economists like Nutter who had an appreciation of the market process and decision making under constraints were better equipped to handle relations with foreign powers. Despite all of these criticisms, *Kissinger's Grand Design* does not treat its subject as an antagonist *per se*, and Nutter has obvious respect for Kissinger's scholarly contributions. The paper is more narrowly a critique of Kissinger's policy of *détente*. A cornerstone of Nutter's critique of *détente* was his argument against Kissinger's concept of peace. Kissinger identified peace with stability and the existence of a set of rules that all states agreed on and followed. Nutter countered that stability is a necessary but not sufficient condition for peace. He observed that,

“the missing element [from Kissinger's concept of peace] is the ethic of a peaceful order, which involves more than the principle of agreement on rules, for the question immediately arises of how agreement is to be reached and at what cost in terms of other values.” (Nutter, 1975, p. 16).

What if – Nutter pointed out – one state forced a weaker state to accept its rules? This would satisfy Kissinger's definition of peace but “is acquiescence the same as consensus” (Nutter, 1975, p. 16)? Kissinger ignored the necessity of balancing the costs of coercion against the value of peace. In the case of *détente*, Nutter argued that whatever stability Kissinger's policy afforded, it came at too high a price in terms of unnecessary concessions to unethical Soviet demands.

Nutter's perspective on Kissinger is useful context for understanding how the two men worked together on Chile policy. Kissinger was frequently entangled in the details of personal negotiations with Allende, while Nutter focused on exploiting the constraints and opposing interests of Allende, the Chilean military, and Chile's neighbors. And Nutter, even more than Henry Kissinger, was not hesitant about confronting Allende out of a desire for stability in South America.

“We Can Get a Coup”: Chile Policy to November 9th, 1970

The Chilean military was known for being professional, apolitical, and constitutionalist, but this began to change in the year before Salvador Allende's election. In October, 1969, the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research warned about “increased military politicization,” a transformation exacerbated by the “general Chilean concern over the country's position as a democracy surrounded by military regimes” and worries about the prospects of a Marxist government. As Allende climbed in the polls, worries spread and coup plots began to percolate.¹⁹

The least violent prospect for keeping Allende out of power was a complicated “Rube Goldberg” scheme to get around the constitutional restrictions preventing Frei from serving two consecutive terms. This was known as the “Track I” approach. The scheme required that the Christian Democrats abandon Tomic in the Congressional ratification vote and back the independent Alessandri instead. Alessandri would then resign from the presidency, triggering new elections which could include Frei. Remarkably, Arnold Harberger was aware of this Rube Goldberg scheme as early as September 7th (Valdés, 1995, p. 241), which is an indication of how close his Chicago Boys were to President Frei. Throughout September, 1970, the SRG and 40 Committee cautiously staked their hopes on Track I, although it became clear over time that Frei was unwilling to play his role.²⁰

As Track I plans proceeded, the CIA was also running “Track II,” an effort to recruit military officers to stage a coup. Track II was ordered directly by Nixon and was essentially independent of SRG and 40 Committee oversight, although some covert activities were discussed in varying levels of detail by both bodies (Kornbluh, 2013). The chief military coup threat at the time was posed by General Roberto Viaux, an opponent of the Christian Democratic president Eduardo Frei

¹⁹ See “Intelligence Note Prepared in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research,” October 3rd, 1969, Document 19 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile, 1969–1973*.

²⁰ For Track I plans see Kornbluh (2013) and the September, 1970 documents in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile, 1969–1973*. Frei even entertained a more extreme version of the Rube Goldberg scheme in which he would resign before the October ratification vote and have a military cabinet appointed that would “neutralize the Communist Party” before he would return to run in a subsequent election. Kornbluh (2013, p. 11) called this alternative “little more than a Frei-authorized military coup.” For Frei's extreme version of the scheme, see Korry to the 40 Committee, September 14, 1970, Document 85, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile, 1969–1973*.

Montalva. Viaux was described by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research as having “a reputation for competence and dynamism.”²¹

On October 8th, Nutter sent a memo to Secretary Laird summarizing the situation in Chile, which was looking increasingly dire for the anti-Allende faction. Nutter asked Laird if he could “spare a few moments” to explain possible courses of action “orally.” The memo frustrated the busy Secretary of Defense, who grumbled in marginal notes that Nutter “merely states problem I am more than aware of” and “offers not one single recommendation.” Laird wrote that “as soon as they forward recommendations I’ll sit down and talk.” Although Laird wanted written recommendations, Nutter might have preferred to rely on oral communication because he knew the SRG and 40 Committee were increasingly focused on sensitive Track I and Track II options to handle Allende. Secretary of State Rogers had similar fears of an inculpatory Chilean paper trail when he warned Kissinger three weeks earlier that “we want to be sure the paper record doesn’t look bad.”²²

Nutter’s memo to Laird came on the heels of a deluge of backchannel messages between Santiago and Washington updating the administration on a wide range of coup activities, including the worrying possibility that “some junior officer will crop up (probably in the navy) and prematurely start something on his own.” Nutter would almost certainly have been read into the Frei and Viaux coup plots around this time due to his SRG and 40 Committee membership and his reputation as a hawk. The fact that he wrote a memo to Laird on October 9th is certainly suggestive that information from the new flurry of backchannel messages had reached him. However, the first declassified document definitively placing Nutter in a meeting where coup options were discussed is the minutes of a meeting of the 40 Committee in the White House Situation Room on October 14th, 1970. In that meeting Karamessines spoke about coup prospects in Chile as if everyone present, including Nutter, was already aware of all the details.²³

Karamessines reported that the only viable option left for a coup before the ratification vote was “the unpredictable General Viaux,” the same Viaux that was considered to have “competence and dynamism” in State Department intelligence analysis a year earlier. But even Viaux’s chances were poor and the consensus of the 40 Committee was that he would not be successful. All present are recorded as agreeing that little could be done *before* the ratification of Allende’s election. Ambassador Korry then proposed covert support for a different group of anti-Allende forces to

²¹ See “Intelligence Note Prepared in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research,” October 3rd, 1969, Document 19 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile, 1969–1973*.

²² For Nutter to Laird, see “Chile: Critical indications Marxist government to assume power,” October 8th, 1970, Digital National Security Archives. For Rogers on the Chile paper trail, see “Transcript of a Telephone Conversation between Secretary of State Rogers and the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger),” September 14th, 1970, Document 88 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile, 1969–1973*.

²³ For worries that “some junior officer would crop up,” see “Memorandum for the Record,” September 14th, 1970, Document 89; for the minutes of the of the October 14th 40 Committee meeting, see “Memorandum for the Record,” October 14th, 1970, Document 149, both in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile, 1969–1973*. Another 40 Committee meeting on Chile was held on September 14th, but no minutes are declassified so it is unclear if Nutter attended this meeting. Even if Nutter did not attend the September 14th meeting, as a member of the Committee he would have been cleared to have any information discussed.

resist the new president *after* the election, although the details of his proposal and the identities of the plotters are still redacted. The minutes say that all present agreed to support that post-election covert option. Once again, “all present” at this meeting included Nutter.²⁴

The 40 Committee adjourned, but Nutter and several others stayed on in the Situation Room for a meeting of the SRG. The purpose of the SRG meeting was to prepare a memo for Nixon that would “list specific actions which the US might take to hamper an Allende regime.” The discussion focused on the uncertainty of the situation in Chile. Kissinger worried that Allende might move cautiously once in power, which could be even more destabilizing to US interests if it legitimized Communism in the region. Ambassador Korry reminded the group that among the Chilean leftists Allende was more moderate and that he had to manage his own far-left flank in his Unidad Popular coalition. The far-left in Chile and in the region, backed by Mao Zedong, could try to incite violence to prove that free elections were not a viable path for Latin American Communists.²⁵

At this point David Packard, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, tried to steer the discussion away from negotiations and towards efforts to remove Allende. Kissinger was receptive to the change in tone, offering “if I read the signs correctly, my client [Nixon] would like to bring him down.” But how to do this? The group descended into a debate over the relative merits of overt and covert action and the speed at which the US could apply pressure on Allende. State Department representatives urged caution, while Defense representatives pressed for greater confrontation. Kissinger concluded the meeting by assigning Nutter and Packard to draft a plan for their preferred “tough approach,” with the State Department assigned to drafting a softer approach. Although Nutter had been silent through the meeting, letting the more senior Packard present the hawks’ position, he interjected himself at the end to challenge Kissinger directly,

“You [Kissinger] mentioned that there may be an adverse public reaction in the US if we were too hostile to Allende at the beginning. It seems to me that if we don’t take a strong stance, a very large segment of US opinion will feel we stood by while the Communists took over. The reaction would be worse than with Cuba.”²⁶

Nutter raised similar concerns about public opposition to ignoring the Communist threat in his memo to Laird on October 9th. After Nutter’s warning to Kissinger the SRG adjourned, agreeing to meet in three days with drafts of the options for Nixon. The next day, Kissinger directed the CIA to shut down the dubious Viaux coup, a message that the CIA passed on to their point person in Chile on October 16th. These were not orders for Viaux to halt coup planning entirely, only his own plot planned for before the Congressional ratification vote. Viaux was encouraged to “join forces with other coup planners so that they may act in concert either before or after 24 October.” Washington was clear that “[i]t is firm and continuing policy that Allende be overthrown by a

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ For the minutes of the SRG group, see “Minutes of a Meeting of the Senior Review Group,” October 14th, 1970, Document 150 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile, 1969–1973*. There is some irony in the heightened concern about Chinese-backed Communists in Chile and its neighbors compared to the more moderate Soviet-backed factions, since one of Nixon and Kissinger’s signature foreign policy achievements was improving relations with China to weaken Communist unity (to the extent that such unity ever existed).

²⁶ Ibid.

coup.” The Nixon national security team was eager to prevent an Allende presidency, but Viaux’s scheme did not appear to be the vehicle for that outcome.²⁷

With the Viaux coup apparently defused, the SRG turned its attention to the options papers assigned on October 14th. The Defense Department options paper that Nutter and Packard were charged with consisted primarily of recommendations to pull the standard diplomatic and economic policy levers. However, it concluded with a more aggressive recommendation to “[t]ake immediate steps to initiate fourth option (Annex) by informing Chilean military of our support.” The “fourth option” was a reference to a secret annex of an August 18th memorandum listing possible options for handling Allende. Three options were described in the body of the August 18th memorandum, and a fourth was added in a secret annex. The title of the annex left no ambiguity: “Extreme Option – Overthrow Allende.” This extreme option envisioned a coup lead by the Chilean military, possibly with the cooperation of business leaders. The fourth option had been controversial in the administration, and had already been rejected by Ambassador Korry, but Nutter and Packard determined it was time to initiate a coup. While acknowledging the uncertainty of success, they recommended taking “immediate steps” to put a coup in motion.²⁸

Providing support to anti-Communist military juntas was familiar territory for Nutter by the time of the October meetings on Chile. He had just returned from the second official US visit with George Papadopoulos and the right-wing Greek military junta since its 1967 coup. The purpose of Nutter’s trip to Greece was to discuss removing the US arms embargo imposed by the Johnson administration. The embargo was lifted on September 22nd. Greek officials reported that the question was settled with Nutter during his visit, although US officials claimed the decision was made by the White House following the visit. Documents in Nutter’s military assistance files suggest that ISA and the administration had actually decided to lift the embargo many months before Nutter’s September meeting with the junta, and were merely delaying a public announcement until after a scheduled NATO summit.²⁹

The Chilean military had an institutional culture of carefully studying and gleaning lessons from international developments (Bawden, 2012), and in 1970 they were closely watching US relations

²⁷ For the CIA turning off the Viaux coup, see “Telegram From the Central Intelligence Agency to the Station in Chile,” October 16th, 1970, Document 154 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile, 1969–1973*.

²⁸ For the Defense Department paper, see “Option,” undated, Document 156; for comparison to the State Department paper, see “Action in Support of the US Posture Towards Chile,” October 16th, 1970, Document 155, for Kissinger’s characterization of the Defense approach as the “hostile approach,” see Kissinger to Nixon, November 5th, 1970, Document 172, all three in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile, 1969–1973*. For the “fourth option” annex, see “Annex NSSM-97, Extreme Option – Overthrow Allende,” Document 14, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume E-16, Documents on Chile, 1969–1973*.

²⁹ See Ward (1970), Sheehan (1970), and Munn (1980) for details on Nutter’s visit with the Greek junta and the competing claims of Greek and US officials. For Nutter’s prior involvement in and advocacy of lifting the embargo, see “Minutes of the National Security Council Review Group Meeting,” October 2nd, 1969, Document 256 and Nutter to Sisco, January 12th, Document 266 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXIX, Eastern Europe; Eastern Mediterranean, 1969–1972*. and 1970. For earlier planning to lift the Greek embargo, see “Weekly Meeting of SECDEF/ISA 8 MAY 1970,” Box 4, Folder 16 of the G. Warren Nutter Papers at the Hoover Institution.

with the Greek junta. On the day the Greek embargo was lifted, Karamessines informed Kissinger that the Chilean military was “thinking twice about a coup, since they believe the US attitude might be the same as it has been for the Greek junta and they would have difficulty getting military aid and support.” Nutter’s trip to Greece to lift the embargo would have provided considerable reassurances to the Chilean military about the support they could expect from the US after a coup. But Nixon’s tolerance of dictatorship in Greece had its limits. By January, 1971, the president was becoming impatient with the country’s failure to liberalize. When Nixon wavered, Nutter joined the Joint Chiefs of Staff in urging the White House not to jeopardize “US strategic interests” by exerting pressure on the Greek junta.³⁰

On October 17th Nutter returned to the White House Situation Room for a Saturday morning SRG meeting to discuss the Defense and State options papers. The first half of the meeting was consumed with the minutiae of the State Department’s proposed post-election negotiations with Allende. How hard would they push him? What leverage did they have? How would he react? The discussion focused on Allende and it was highly personal, reflecting the hallmarks of Kissinger’s approach to international relations that Nutter criticized in *Kissinger’s Grand Design*.³¹

Raymond Leddy, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Inter-American Affairs, presented Nutter and Packard’s plan. Although the Defense Department offered a harder line than State on the coup, the differences highlighted during the SRG discussion were subtle. The major differences discussed during the meeting were that Defense did not advise negotiating with Allende between the ratification vote and his inauguration, and that Defense proposed a more hostile public announcement of opposition to the Allende regime. Somewhat remarkably, Leddy and his State Department counterpart did not identify the “fourth option” in the Nutter and Packard paper as a major difference between the two. The State Department options paper did list numerous covert activities, but these were restricted to propaganda and financial support for opposition parties. There was no mention by State of attempting to overthrow Allende.³²

Nutter eventually interjected with a broader observation about Allende’s institutional constraints. He noted that “Allende has to have a power base. He will need to have control of the army and the police.” The meeting wandered back to the negotiations and Allende’s behavior during the anticipated diplomatic repartee. Nutter broke into the discussion again, returning more adamantly to his earlier point about Allende’s institutional environment,

“We have discussed whether we can get along with an Allende government over the long run. The Chilean military is asking the same questions, and they may conclude that the answer is yes. Allende must solidify his power base in Chile, and

³⁰ For Karamessines on the Chilean military, see “Memorandum for the Record by the Deputy Director for Plans of the Central Intelligence Agency (Karamessines),” September 22nd, 1970, Document 112 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile, 1969–1973*. See Poole (2013), page 134 for details on Nutter’s concerns that pressure on the junta might threaten US strategic interests.

³¹ See “Minutes of a Meeting of the Senior Review Group,” October 17th, 1970, Document 158 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile, 1969–1973*.

³² *Ibid*.

that means gaining control of the military. When he tries that—and the military see their own survival at stake, we can get a coup.”³³

Understanding Allende’s institutional constraints, Nutter asserted, was essential to getting the coup that he and Packard recommended in their options paper and that the whole administration ultimately wanted. Nutter assured Kissinger that “we can get a coup,” and that the key was not negotiation with Allende or personal diplomacy. The key lay in exploiting the institutional dynamics and incentives faced by Allende and the Chilean military. Nutter pushed the fundamental issue in unequivocal terms at the end of the meeting, exemplifying the timing and tactics that Thomas Moorer recalled over a decade later.

Four days later, General Viaux disregarded Kissinger’s October 16th order to stand down and launched his coup, targeting the highly-respected constitutionalist and coup opponent, General Rene Schneider. Removing Schneider was the necessary first step in turning the military against Allende. Although Viaux’s men claimed they only intended to kidnap Schneider, the situation escalated when the general fought back. Schneider was shot by his would-be kidnappers and died four days later. Far from catalyzing a coup, the assassination of Schneider rallied Chileans to constitutional order and recognition of Allende’s election victory, which was ratified on October 24th (Valdés, 1995; Kornbluh, 2013).

Back in Washington the Defense and State Department plans were streamlined and combined on October 28th and 29th. Nutter and Packard’s original recommendation to initiate the overthrow of Allende was not added to the Defense section of the final NSC options paper. It was placed instead in the section discussing CIA proposals for covert action. This reorganization segregated the various SRG proposals into classic Track I public diplomacy and Track II backchannel or covert operations. Kissinger forwarded a summary of the final options paper to Nixon that was highly critical of the new version of Nutter and Packard’s proposal. The summary suggested that the Defense approach was not tougher on Allende than State’s, it “only sounds that way,” and it “seems to be even more ineffective.” The military assistance recommendations came in for special criticism in the summary for Nixon, which noted that the Defense plan “does not pretend to be tough when it touches on DOD interests – military assistance.” Of course, the Defense plan only looked like an empty threat in the final options paper because Nutter and Packard’s original recommendation to take immediate steps to overthrow Allende was removed and presented to the president as a CIA option instead.³⁴

The NSC met to consider the final options paper on November 6th, and the president’s decision on Chile policy was laid down on November 9th in National Security Directive Memorandum (NSDM) 93. Nixon sided with the State Department’s advice to be “correct but cool,” rather than overtly confrontational as Defense recommended. Credit and other economic assistance would be restricted, and the US would oppose Chile in international fora.³⁵

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ For the summary of the final options paper see “Analytic Summary of an Options Paper,” October 28, 1970, Document 167 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile*.

³⁵ For the NSC meeting, see “Memorandum of Conversation of a Meeting of the National Security Council,” November 6th, 1970, Document 173; for NSDM 93 see “National Security Decision Memorandum 93,” November

Cultivating a “Coup Climate”: Nutter and Chile Policy After NSDM 93

The consensus of the various October meetings and the November 6th meeting of the NSC was that little immediate action could be taken by the US to prevent Allende’s presidency. Washington would have to wait for an overreach by Allende or changes in conditions on the ground to provide the pretext for removing him from power. The administration pivoted to cultivating what Thomas Karamessines called a “coup climate.” This was slower work, but it eventually bore fruit in the 1973 coup. Official executive branch accounts often take care to draw a bold line between activities related to the pre-election 1970 coup plots on the one hand and the successful coup in 1973 on the other. But the government’s work to hamper Allende and foster a coup did not stop abruptly after Allende’s inauguration, even if it would take several years to come to fruition.³⁶

On November 13th Nutter attended a briefing on Chile by the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Charles Meyer, and met with the 40 Committee to start implementing NSDM 93. The briefing was tense due to the failure to prevent Allende from assuming the presidency and the principals were eager for more decisive action. An exasperated Kissinger complained,

“In August we were told to lie low so as not to screw up the [Chilean] Congressional vote. In October we were told to lie low so as not to screw up the opposition in November. Now we find ourselves with no opposition.”³⁷

After covering non-covert business, several attendees of the Meyer briefing left before a short meeting of the 40 Committee commenced. Warren Nutter remained in the room. The 40 Committee decided that they must accelerate the acquisition of foreign exchange to finance covert operations before Allende imposed more stringent capital controls. Kissinger asked the CIA to produce more covert options and report back. The next five and a half lines of the minutes are still classified.³⁸ Less than a week after the November 13th meetings, Nutter participated in another meeting of the SRG on Chile. The group discussed US policy towards Allende’s recognition of Cuba, arms sales to the Chilean military, and cutting loans to Chilean universities, all in an effort to turn the screws on the new regime. Nutter did not attend the 40 Committee meeting on that day.³⁹

⁹th, 1970, Document 175, both in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile*. Nutter was a member of the NSC SRG but not the NSC itself and did not attend the NSC meeting on November 6th.

³⁶ For an example of the focus on and sharp distinction between the events of 1970 and 1973 in federal accounts, see the CIA’s response to Section 311 of the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000, which required the CIA to provide a public report on its involvement in the coup (<https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/chile/>). See the Church Committee’s staff report, which said that covert action in Chile “continued, and even expanded, in the early 1970s.”

³⁷ See “Record of a Briefing by the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Meyer),” November 13th, 1970, Document 178 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile, 1969–1973*.

³⁸ For the 40 Committee meeting, see “Memorandum for the Record,” November 13th, 1970, Document 179, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile, 1969–1973*

³⁹ Ware’s (1986, p. 13) account of ISA during this period also highlights Nutter’s personal concern with the alignment of Allende’s Chile and Castro’s Cuba. For the November 19th SRG meeting, see “Minutes of a Meeting of the Senior Review Group,” November 19th, 1970, Document 183; for the attendees of the 40 Committee meeting,

Chile planning meetings reverted to a slower cadence after 1970, although activities consistent with the directives of NSDM 93 continued. Nutter continued to be briefed on emerging coup plots⁴⁰ and advised on restricting credit to Chile. A particularly consequential restriction of credit directly involving Nutter was the denial of Export-Import Bank credit to purchase two Boeing 707s and one Boeing 727. This loan denial was significant because it was obvious to all that there was no financial reason to deny Chile the loan – the decision was transparently political.⁴¹

All other sources US and multilateral aid besides military assistance imploded after 1970 in what Allende described as an “invisible blockade.” US AID direct spending declined from \$397.5 million during Frei’s administration to \$3.3 million during Allende’s, and Export-Import Bank assistance declined from \$278 million to \$4.7 million. The World Bank provided no assistance to Chile under Allende, even though it provided \$131.5 million under Frei (Muñoz, 1980). Dinges and Landau (1980, p. 49) date the virtual end of all non-military aid to the Export-Import Bank’s rejection of the Boeing loan in August, 1971, which sent a signal to aid providers that there was to be no cooperation with Allende. As noted above, Nutter participated in SRG discussions of the Boeing loan and supported the decision to deny the loan.

Although Nutter was involved in a range of activities designed to create a “coup climate,” his two most important contributions between NSDM 93 and the 1973 coup was directing the US military assistance program and his 1971 tour of Chile’s neighbors. The remainder of this section discusses those two contributions in greater detail.

Warren Nutter and Military Assistance to Chile

One area where the US maintained leverage over Allende between the 1970 election and the 1973 coup was the military assistance program, which was overseen by Nutter with policy guidance from the State Department and ultimate approval by Congress. Bawden (2016, p. 57) identifies military assistance as one of the three bases of the “post-war inter-American system” (the other two being the Treaty of Inter-American Reciprocal Assistance and the Organization of American States). Military assistance was both a carrot and a stick for the US to wield against Chile. It was a way to strengthen ties with the Chilean military, which offered the best hope for a coup, but restrictions on military assistance could also communicate US disapproval of Allende’s behavior. If the Chilean military felt that Allende’s policies were threatening their standing with the Pentagon, they might be induced to take action against Allende. The SRG discussed military assistance to Chile on December 19th, 1970 and February 17th, 1971. Nutter was presumably

see “Memorandum for the Record,” November 19th, 1970, Document 184, both in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile*.

⁴⁰ For a briefing on an anticipated but failed coup by General Alfredo Canales in September, 1972, see “Situation in Chile Over the Weekend,” undated, online digitized copy from the G. Warren Nutter papers, Hoover Institution Archives. Canales’s coup attempt had been supported by the CIA since before Allende’s election; see “Telegram From the Central Intelligence Agency to the Station in Chile,” October 16th, 1970, Document 154 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile, 1969–1973*.

⁴¹ For the SRG meeting, see “Minutes of a Meeting of the Senior Review Group,” June 3rd, 1971, Document 73 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume E–16, Documents on Chile, 1969–1973*.

present, given his oversight of military assistance, but I have not found declassified minutes of those meetings to confirm the attendees.⁴²

In 1971, the principal planned military assistance to Chile consisted of two Lockheed C-130 military transport aircraft. In June, 1971, Nutter suggested the US could threaten delivering only one of the C-130s if Allende challenged US interests, consistent with the carrot-and-stick view of the program. Conditioning military assistance on Allende's behavior was a delicate strategy. Clamping down too hard risked alienating the Chilean military, which offered the best hope for a coup. Alienating the Chilean military was a perennial concern for the Defense Department. In January and March, 1972, Lieutenant General E.B. LeBailly, chairman of the Inter-American Defense Board, warned the Office of the Secretary of Defense about Latin America's growing willingness to purchase arms from the Soviets if they became too difficult to obtain from the US. In his personal copy of LeBailly's memos, Nutter highlighted the paragraph specifically pertaining to Chile, which warned about the possibility of "political adventure in that government inimical to US interests" if the Chilean military was not supported by the US. A CIA memorandum in September of that year similarly warned that "Allende continues to pressure high command to buy Soviet military equipment." LeBailly and the CIA were not misled by paranoia; Allende visited Moscow in December, 1972, and received promises of Soviet military assistance going forward (Uliánova, 2000). Although military assistance from the Soviets was most alarming, the US also faced competition in the arms trade from its allies. Besides the US, Chile's chief source of military assistance in the early 1970s was the United Kingdom. Europe generally had fewer restrictions on assistance, making them a constant threat to US hegemony (Einaudi et al., 1973).⁴³

Nixon was skeptical of providing Chile with any military assistance while Allende was in power, and in a meeting with Kissinger he derisively called Nutter's proposal to deliver only half of the C-130s the "little bit pregnant option." Kissinger agreed that "they have twisted your instructions to keep contact with the military into a relationship where we do more for the Chilean military than for any other military in Latin America." Nixon fumed in response "they know damn well what I'm trying to get at, and they don't want to do it." The State Department also registered its disapproval of Nutter's willingness to deal generously with the Chilean military. While Nixon and Kissinger doubted Nutter could successfully play the military off Allende, some officials in the

⁴² For references to the content of the December 19th and February 17th meetings, see "CHILEAN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE REQUEST FOR FMS CREDIT ASSISTANCE IN PROCURING ARMY AND AIR FORCE EQUIPMENT," undated, Document 72 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-16, Documents on Chile*.

⁴³ For the Chilean request for the C-130s as well as F-5s and C-47s, see "Chilean Interest in U.S. Military Equipment," Tab E of "Memorandum for Henry Kissinger," November 17, 1970, CIA Document Number LOC-HAK-460-5-7-8. For Nutter's suggestion on the C-130s, see "Minutes of a Meeting of the Senior Review Group," June 3rd, 1970, Document 73 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-16, Documents on Chile, 1969-1973*. Slobodian (2018) argues that protecting what he calls "xenos rights" or foreigners' "right of safe passage and unmolested ownership of their property and capital" was fundamental to the neoliberal project in its dealings with the Global South. Nutter's defense of American corporations in Chile can be thought of as a defense of xenos rights. For the memoranda, see LeBailly, "Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense," January 26th and March 7th, 1972, both in Box 4, Folder 18, File "Sec Def/ISA Meeting Notes for 1972, January-June" in the G. Warren Nutter Papers at the Hoover Institution Archives. For the CIA memorandum on Allende pressuring the high command, see "Chile: Likelihood and Possible Consequences of a Military Coup," posted at www.foia.state.gov.

State Department were concerned about the propriety of even trying. Ronald Spiers, Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs, worried that Nutter's actions were tantamount to "saying publicly that we want to help a military establishment dissociate from its government." Of course, this was precisely what Nutter hoped to accomplish, as he outlined in various SRG meetings. Spiers recommended that the Undersecretary of State sign and transmit a letter to Nutter insisting that he end all material grants to Chile and restricted assistance to training only.⁴⁴

Figure 1 reports expenditures in three key categories of military assistance for the Chilean military from FY 1964 through FY 1975: sales, "military assistance" (i.e., grants), and training expenditures. Chilean military assistance during this period reflected the broader pattern of long-term declines in grants and increase in sales. Sales and grants were approximately equal for Chile in FY 1969, with sales surpassing grants in subsequent years. Annual military sales were lumpy due to the irregular purchase of large weapons systems, changing political winds in Congress, and reliance on other suppliers besides the US government. The first large increase in sales to Chile occurred in FY 1970, before Allende's election. During the Allende administration annual military sales to Chile were somewhat higher than historical averages but much lower than the FY 1970 spike. This could reflect the State Department and White House's skepticism of buying the loyalty of Chilean generals, or it could simply reflect normal ebbs and flows in Chilean demand.⁴⁵

In his role as Chief of Staff of the Army under Allende, Augusto Pinochet himself was involved in negotiating some of the arms purchases from the US that are reported in Figure 1. A 1972 CIA account of Pinochet's trip to Mexico to purchase US tanks provides an excellent illustration of how the military assistance program helped to cultivate a coup climate in Chile. Pinochet, who is described in the memorandum as "previously the strict constitutionalist," admitted to US officers in Mexico that he was "now harboring second thoughts." The officers assured Pinochet that the US would support a coup in Chile "with whatever means necessary," exemplifying the recommendation in Nutter and Packard's options paper to initiate a coup by informing the Chilean military of US support. These contacts were made because Pinochet was in Mexico to buy tanks from the foreign military sales program directed by Nutter. Nutter's military assistance and sales programs were thus a critical vehicle for developing relationships with potential coup plotters.⁴⁶

Not surprisingly, the early years of the Pinochet regime saw substantial growth in military sales relative to the Allende years. However, as news of the regime's crimes spread Congress discussed and then imposed an arms embargo on the country (Bawden 2013). President Ford was opposed to the embargo of the dictator, which he attributed to "a new generation of wildass Democrats."

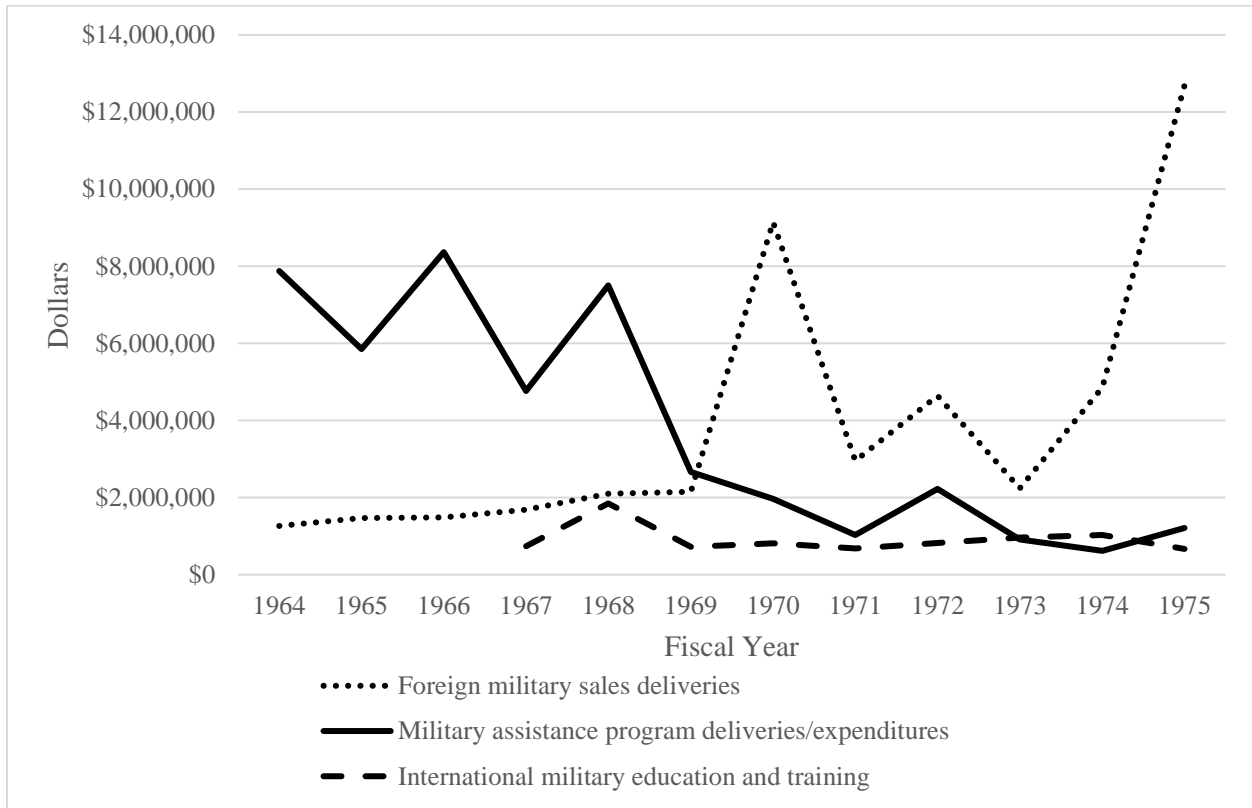
⁴⁴ For Nixon on the "little bit pregnant" option, see "Conversation Between Nixon and Kissinger," June 11, 1971, Document 42 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume E–10, Documents on American Republics, 1969–1972*. For Spiers on Nutter, see "Grant Material Military Assistance in Chile" in "Undersecretary's Visit to Chile, US/Chile Background Papers, April 1972," in the Digital National Security Archives.

⁴⁵ Commercial arms sales were also critical and were followed closely by the Pentagon, but these were not directly controlled by Nutter or his office. Before 1976 the federal fiscal year ran from July 1st to June 30th. FY 1970 was therefore complete before the Chilean popular vote in September, 1970.

⁴⁶ For details on Pinochet's trip to Mexico, see "Chile: Likelihood and Possible Consequences of a Military Coup," posted at www.foia.state.gov.

Nutter was no longer at the Pentagon during the junta period or during the embargo, which was passed in 1976.⁴⁷

Figure 1. U.S. Military Assistance and Sales Expenditures for Chile, FY1964-FY1975 (millions of dollars)

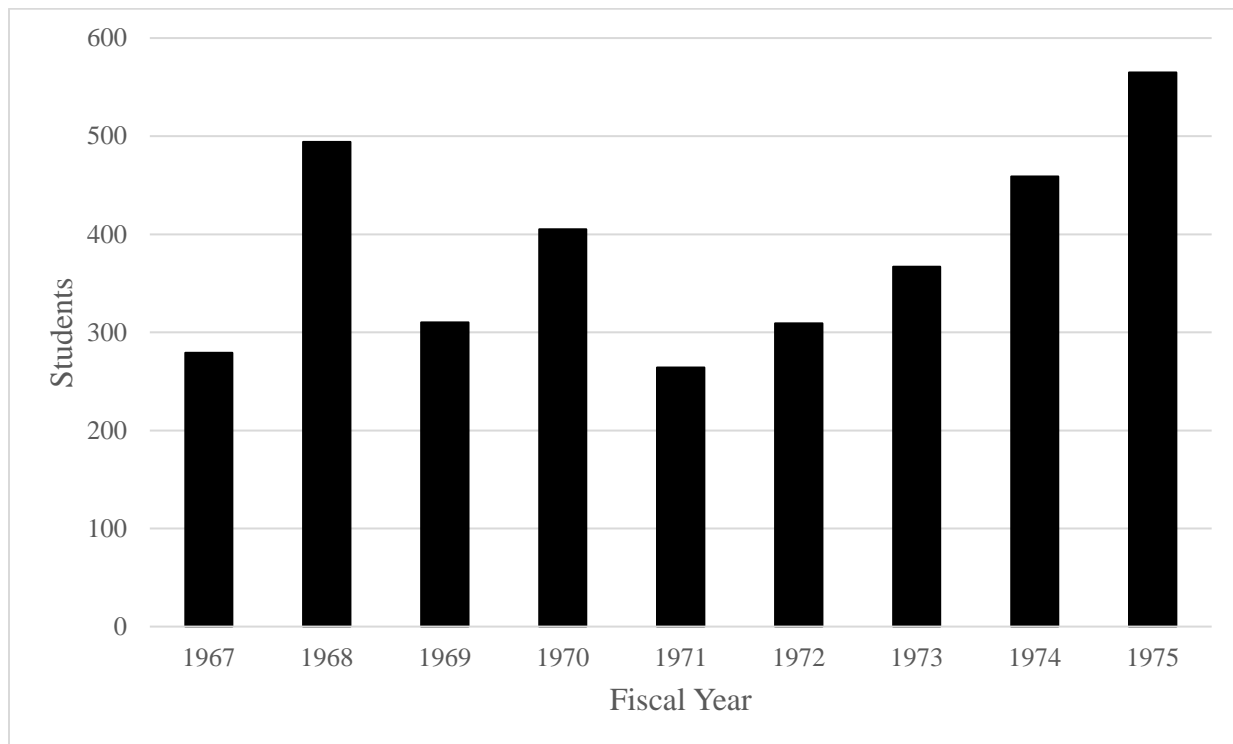


Source: Foreign military sales deliveries and military assistance program deliveries/expenditures are from the 1974 and 1975 Foreign Military Sales and Military Assistance Facts reports. International military education and training expenditures are from the 1976 Foreign Military Sales and Military Assistance Facts report.

Notes: International military education and training expenditures are not available before FY 1967 and are not reported annually by country in reports prior to 1976. Figures are only reported through FY 1975 because after the 1976 report the reported historical expenditures (i.e., FY1964-1975) change somewhat. This may be due to the change in the dating of the fiscal year in 1976. These changes do not substantively affect the pattern of expenditures.

⁴⁷ As indicated in the note to Figure 1, expenditures are not reported after 1975 because subsequent military assistance reports are somewhat inconsistent with earlier reported expenditure levels (possibly due to the change in the fiscal year in 1976). However, the 1976 Military Assistance Facts report does show even higher military sales to Chile in FY 1976, immediately before the embargo was imposed. For Ford’s thoughts on Democrats, see “Memorandum of Conversation,” December 3rd, 1974, Box 7, National Security Advisor Memoranda of Conversation, 1973-1977, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum. As discussed above, Nutter was involved in the decision to reject the Boeing loan.

Figure 2. Chilean Students in the International Military Education and Training Program, FY1967-FY1975



Source: The 1976 Foreign Military Sales and Military Assistance Facts reports, published by the Data Systems and Reports Division.

Notes: Students trained through the international military education and training program are not available before FY 1967 and are not reported annually by country in reports prior to 1976.

Expenditures on the international military education and training (IMET) program, which included both intensive training and promotional guided tours, were relatively small compared to sales and grants programs. Nevertheless, the US government considered these training activities essential for maintaining influence with foreign militaries. The training for foreign officers was as much ideological indoctrination as it was military and technical, and it cemented pro-American attitudes among the trainees (Wolpin, 1972). Figure 2 reports the number of Chilean military students trained by the IMET program between FY 1967 and FY 1975, which provides a better sense of the scale of training activities than the expenditures presented in Figure 1. Similar to trends in military sales, the number of students trained spiked during the Frei administration (FY1968 and FY 1970) immediately before Allende's election, but also exhibited steady growth during the Allende years that continued uninterrupted into the Pinochet years.

Some of the IMET students were trained in the US, but often they were trained abroad. This was the case for Latin American students who attended the infamous School of the Americas in the Panama Canal Zone. At least ten of Pinochet's top advisors were trained through the IMET program at the School of the Americas (Panetta and Seragglio, 2000). Pinochet went on guided

tours of the US and the Canal Zone that were sponsored by the US government in 1968. One CIA memorandum from 1972 suggests Pinochet himself was trained at the School of the Americas.⁴⁸

Despite the varied opposition that he faced, Nutter made his mark on Chile with arms sales and training. Military hardware is durable and the legacy of Nutter's Lockheed C-130 bargaining chips can be traced forward into the Pinochet era. Less than three years after the SRG meeting discussing the C-130s, Pinochet would use the same planes to transport political prisoners back to Santiago from the notorious prison camp on Dawson Island, a stark outpost near Antarctica. We know that these were the same planes that Nutter provided through the military assistance program because one of Pinochet's prisoners, Orlando Letelier, recognized them as the aircraft he had overseen delivery of when he served as Allende's ambassador to the US (which coincided with Nutter's tenure as ASD-ISA). Letelier remembered being skeptical of the need for the C-130s when they were requested by the Chilean Air Force. He also recalled worrying about the possibility that he and the other Dawson Island prisoners would be thrown out of the C-130 mid-flight, as Pinochet had done to other political opponents (Dinges and Landau, 1980, p. 79).⁴⁹

Warren Nutter's 1971 Latin America Trip

In November, 1971, Nutter conducted an official tour of several Latin American countries with his wife, Jane. The trip lasted about two weeks and covered six countries: Nicaragua, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Colombia. Four of these countries were run by dictators or military juntas (Nicaragua, Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay), and most would eventually collaborate with Pinochet on the CIA-backed state terror campaign against Latin American leftists known as Operation Condor.⁵⁰ The itinerary was responsive to Nixon's prioritization of strong relations with anti-leftist militaries in Latin America, particularly in the autocracies. Nutter's trip was mentioned during the June 3rd, 1971, SRG meeting on Chile when Kissinger requested an update on planned trips by senior administration officials.⁵¹

The purpose of Nutter's trip was to strengthen relations with Latin American militaries. Nutter embarked on his tour with increased authority to distribute equipment and weapons systems under the August, 1971, reorganization of the military assistance program, which centralized Defense

⁴⁸ For Pinochet's tours of the US and the Canal Zone, see "Biography on Pinochet," November 1st, 1974; for the CIA reference to Pinochet's time at the School of the Americas, see "Chile: Likelihood and Possible Consequences of a Military Coup," September 13th, 1972, both posted at www.foia.state.gov.

⁴⁹ Letelier would later criticize Milton Friedman's involvement with the Pinochet regime, an incident discussed below. Letelier was assassinated on September 21st, 1976 in Washington DC. We know Chile did not own C-130s before Nutter's time as ASD-ISA because they are not included in the description of Chile's fleet in "Chilean Interest in U.S. Military Equipment," Tab E of "Memorandum for Henry Kissinger," November 17, 1970, CIA Document Number LOC-HAK-460-5-7-8.

⁵⁰ Condor occurred after Nutter's time at the Pentagon. For more details on Condor, see Dinges (2005) and Kornbluh (2013).

⁵¹ The focus on military dictatorships was an explicit directive from Nixon. He clarified at the November 6th, 1970 NSC meeting, "[I]et's not think about what the really democratic countries in Latin America say—the game is in Brazil and Argentina" (see "Memorandum of Conversation of a Meeting of the National Security Council," November 6th, 1970, Document 173 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume XXI, Chile, 1969–1973*. For mention of Nutter's trip in the SRG meeting, see "Minutes of a Meeting of the Senior Review Group," June 3rd, 1971, Document 73 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume E–16, Documents on Chile, 1969–1973*).

responsibilities under ISA. The *Journal do Brasil* reported on the trip and noted Nutter's insistence that he was in the region to meet and build relations with his military counterparts, and that he could not speak on policy outside military assistance. Nutter cited the reduction in spending in Vietnam as a recent development that freed the US to channel more resources to military assistance than in the past.⁵²

The Nutters' first stop was likely Nicaragua. The Nicaraguan agenda is the only agenda missing from the archival record, so that leg of the journey cannot be exactly dated, but other trip documentation lists Nicaragua first. We do know from the contact list that Nutter met with Anastasio Somoza Debayle, the Nicaraguan dictator, and several military leaders during his time in the country. After Nicaragua, Nutter spent November 12th and 13th in Venezuela, which was a democracy in 1971. Nutter met with Venezuelan military leaders and US officials, but not the democratically elected president, Rafael Caldera.⁵³

From Venezuela, the Nutters traveled to Brazil, where they spent four days. Nutter's agenda for his time in the city of Brasilia includes an intriguing warning not included in any of the other agendas: "CAUTION: DO NOT DISCUSS CLASSIFIED INFORMATION IN HOTEL ROOMS. DO NOT LEAVE CLASSIFIED MATERIAL IN HOTEL ROOMS." There is no record of what classified information was brought or discussed, but the warning is a reminder that he was not in Latin America for social calls or sightseeing. Brazil had been ruled by a military dictatorship since its 1964 coup. Nutter met with the chief of staff of the Brazilian army, the chief of staff of the Air Force, and the chief of the National Intelligence Service. The Brazilian president, General Emilio Garrastazu Medici, was absent from Nutter's agenda. Medici was scheduled to travel to Washington to meet Nixon a few weeks later, a trip which garnered considerable media attention in the US. Although it was not reported publicly, one of the topics discussed by Medici and Nixon was US-Brazil cooperation to support the Chilean military in overthrowing Allende.⁵⁴

When Brazilian journalists raised questions about why non-military foreign aid was being cut, Nutter reiterated his responsibility for military relations. "I am not in Washington," he responded, "and it is not in my purview to discuss the recommendations of the Department of State [on foreign

⁵² For the 1971 reorganization of the military assistance program, see Department of Defense Directive 5105.38, August 11, 1971, Box 3, Folder 15, File 18 of the G. Warren Nutter Papers at the Hoover Institution Archives. For *Journal do Brasil* coverage, see "Nutter chega à Guanabara," (1971), "Nutter considera positiva a ajuda externa dos EUA" (1971), and "Nutter visita S. Paulo" (1971). Nutter is quoted as having exclusively military-related purposes in "Nutter considera positiva a ajuda externa dos EUA" (1971). I thank Matheus Grasselli for assistance with the Portuguese translation.

⁵³ For contacts in Nicaragua, see "Nicaragua: Key Host Country Officials Contacted," undated; for contacts in Venezuela see "Venezuela: Key Host Country Officials Contacted," undated; for the Venezuela agenda see "Itinerary for visit of the Honorable G. Warren Nutter, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, to Venezuela, 12 to 14 November 1971," all in Box 3, Folder 10, File Number 12, Inter-American Affairs of the G. Warren Nutter Papers at the Hoover Institution Archives.

⁵⁴ For Nutter's Brazil itineraries and contacts, see "Visit to Brazil by the Honorable G. Warren Nutter – ASD/ISA, Brasilia Itinerary," undated; "Rio de Janeiro Schedule," undated; "Sao Paulo Schedule," undated; "Brazil: Key Host Country Officials Contacted," undated, all in Box 3, Folder 10, File Number 12, Inter-American Affairs of the G. Warren Nutter Papers at the Hoover Institution Archives. See Novitski (1971) for public reporting on Medici's visit with Nixon. For details on Medici and Nixon's discussion of overthrowing Allende, see "Memorandum for The President's File," December 9th, 1971, Document 143, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume E–10, Documents on American Republics, 1969–1972*.

aid]: they are all of a political character while my sphere is merely military.” Nutter and his assistant referred non-military questions to Robert Finch, a special assistant to President Nixon who was conducting a separate Latin American tour at the same time.⁵⁵

On November 18th, Nutter left Brazil for Argentina and met with two of the three members of the Argentine military junta. He met for 45 minutes with Lieutenant Colonel Carlos Alberto Rey in the Condor Building (the Air Force headquarters) and for half an hour with Admiral Petro Alberto Jose Gnavi at Edificio Libertad (the Naval headquarters). Lieutenant General Alejandro Agustin Lanusse, the third member of the junta who served as president, was noted as being “absent from the capital” at the time. One of the non-military contacts Nutter made in Argentina was Pedro Real, a former ambassador to the US. Ambassador Real was a firm ally in the resistance to Allende and had previously expressed his deep concerns about the election of Allende and “its impact on the hemisphere and the inter-American system.”⁵⁶

From Argentina, the Nutters flew on to Paraguay, which had been ruled by the dictator Alfredo Stroessner since 1954. Among twentieth century Latin American dictators, the full duration of Stroessner’s rule was surpassed only by Fidel Castro’s. But on November 20th, 1971, when Nutter’s plane touched down at Presidente Stroessner International Airport, Stroessner’s time in office eclipsed Castro’s by five years. Of all the dictators and junta leaders that Nutter met with on his Latin America trip, only Stroessner held on to power long enough to be personally involved in the Operation Condor terror campaign. Paraguayan files containing details on Condor atrocities known as the “Archives of Terror” were instrumental in building the legal case against Pinochet (Menjívar and Rodriguez, 2009). Nutter met only briefly with Stroessner on November 22nd, but he spent the entire evening of November 20th with Stroessner’s Minister of Defense, Leodegar Cabello. He also met with the Foreign Minister Raul Pastor, who had recently pressed for increased US military assistance to Paraguay to counter the leftist threat in Chile.⁵⁷

Perhaps the most curious day of Nutter’s entire Latin American trip was November 21st, between his meeting with Cabello and his meeting with Stroessner. This was the only day of the trip with no disclosed meetings with heads of state or other dignitaries. The day was reserved to see the town of Mariscal Estigarribia and “visit local sites.” Mariscal Estigarribia was not a typical destination for Paraguayan sightseeing. A town of only 3,200, it was surrounded by the arid Chaco countryside, home to scattered indigenous groups and ranchers. In their article on Paraguayan

⁵⁵ Nutter is quoted in “Nutter considera positiva a ajuda externa dos EUA” (1971). I thank Matheus Grasselli for assistance with the Portuguese translation.

⁵⁶ For Argentina agenda and contact list see “Corrected Schedule of Activities,” undated, and “Argentina: Key Host Country Officials Contacted,” undated, both in Box 3, Folder 10, File Number 12, Inter-American Affairs of the G. Warren Nutter Papers at the Hoover Institution Archives. For Pedro Real’s concerns on Chile, see Nachmanoff to Kissinger, November 16, 1970, Document 31 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume E–10, Documents on American Republics, 1969–1972*.

⁵⁷ For Paraguay agenda and contact list see “Itinerary: Visit of Dr. G. Warren Nutter, Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs),” undated, and “Paraguay: Key Host Country Officials Contacted,” undated, both in Box 3, Folder 10, File Number 12, Inter-American Affairs of the G. Warren Nutter Papers at the Hoover Institution Archives. For Pastor’s request for military assistance, see “Telegram 741 From the Embassy in Paraguay to the Department of State,” April 27, 1971, Document 573 *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume E–10, Documents on American Republics, 1969–1972*.

indigenous populations, Klein and Stark (1977 p. 378) report that the Chaco, while “consisting of 60% of the land mass of Paraguay, is inhabited by 3% of the country’s population.” Although lacking in “local sites,” Mariscal Estigarribia did offer a large military base that served as the regional headquarters for the Paraguayan armed forces. Other documents in Nutter’s trip file hint at a military purpose for his excursion to the Chaco: Nutter is recorded as having made contact with Brigadier General Fausto Prieto, the commanding officer of Paraguay’s 6th Infantry Division, which was stationed at Mariscal Estigarribia. Prieto is not named in any of the daily agendas, but since he was based at Mariscal Estigarribia, Nutter presumably met with him there on the 21st.⁵⁸

In July, 1970, Stroessner wrote to Nixon about leasing facilities at the Mariscal Estigarribia base to the US military. Nutter’s secretive trip to the town may have been related to these plans for a US outpost in the heart of South America, although it’s not clear why it was necessary to be so oblique in a classified agenda. The US eventually helped Stroessner build a base that could house 16,000 troops, equipped with a massive runway and radar system. US troops stationed at Mariscal Estigarribia have been given diplomatic immunity by the Paraguayan government, but the use of the base and the scale of the US military presence there remains shrouded in mystery (Dangl, 2006; Lindsay-Poland, 2009).⁵⁹

Nutter’s last destination before heading back to Washington was Colombia. Of the two democracies the Nutters visited, Colombia had relatively weaker democratic institutions. Colombia was not ruled by a traditional dictator or junta, but it was governed by a “national unity pact” called the National Front that required a scheduled alternation of power between the Liberal and Conservative parties. Although not technically dictatorships, these unity pacts were a method for stabilizing political conflict, centralizing power in the hands of a few elites, and shielding the government from popular control. Shortly before Nutter’s visit, the CIA described national unity pacts as “democratic window-dressing” and “ploys by strongmen whose terms of office are legally terminated.”⁶⁰

The military assistance program and the Latin American trip were not as directly targeted at overthrowing Allende as Nutter’s assertion to Kissinger that “we can get a coup” or his recommendation to “overthrow Allende.” Nevertheless, this work was essential to the rise of the Pinochet regime. Pinochet first made his coup inclinations known under the auspices of a military

⁵⁸ For the Paraguay agenda and contacts see “Itinerary: Visit of Dr. G. Warren Nutter, Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs),” undated, and “Paraguay: Key Host Country Officials Contacted,” undated, both in Box 3, Folder 10, File Number 12, Inter-American Affairs of the G. Warren Nutter Papers at the Hoover Institution Archives. For a discussion of the forces stationed at Mariscal Estigarribia, see the CIA intelligence report “Paraguay Part V. Regional Analysis of the Chaco,” September 1st, 1960, CIA Document Number IA-RDP79-01009A002600010012-0, and Hanratty and Meditz (1990).

⁵⁹ See Stroessner to Nixon, July 20, 1970, Document 569, and Nixon to Stroessner, October 8, 1970, Document 571, both in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume E–10, Documents on American Republics, 1969–1972*.

⁶⁰ For Nutter’s agenda and contacts in Colombia, see “Secretary Nutter/Mr. Leddy,” undated and “Colombia: Key Host Country Officials Contacted,” undated, both in Box 3, Folder 10, File Number 12, Inter-American Affairs of the G. Warren Nutter Papers at the Hoover Institution Archives. For intelligence community discussion of unity pacts, see “Intelligence Memorandum, OCI No. 2080/71,” October 18, 1971, Document 509 in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume E–10, Documents on American Republics, 1969–1972*. See Dix (1980) for a detailed discussion of the Colombian National Front and a comparison to other “consociational” governments.

assistance program transaction, and many of Nutter's tour contacts were actively hostile to the Allende government. Nutter's work to cultivate a "coup climate" set the stage for dramatic events of 1973.

The Chicago-Chile Connection

Warren Nutter was a product of the University of Chicago and a close professional partner of other Chicago graduates, but he did not practice or promote this pedigree at the Pentagon in any recognizable way. Nutter was also uninvolved in what Valdés (1995) calls the "ideological transfer" that occurred between the University of Chicago and the Chilean "Chicago Boys." Nevertheless, some discussion of the Chicago connection is obligatory in light of the central role of that university in the public outcry over Pinochet. Four economists are typically associated with Pinochet's Chile: Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, Arnold Harberger, and James Buchanan. Nutter had ties to all four men, but particularly the three Americans. Friedman supervised Nutter's dissertation. Harberger was a contemporary of Nutter's in the doctoral program and (with Nutter) provided the foundation for the Chicago School's signature perspective on monopoly and competition.⁶¹ Buchanan was a close collaborator of Nutter's at the Thomas Jefferson Center at UVA and a contemporary in the Chicago doctoral program. Nutter did not work directly with Hayek and their time at Chicago did not overlap, but they certainly knew and respected each other.⁶²

None of the three Americans ever justified or acted as an apologist for the Pinochet dictatorship. Although Friedman, Harberger, and Buchanan could all have rebuked the Chilean dictator in a more full-throated manner, that may have been dangerous while they were still in country, and it would have done little practical good for the Chilean people in any case. Hayek's relationship with Chile is far more objectionable, and will be discussed subsequently.

Milton Friedman and Arnold Harberger's entanglement with Chile began in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when a steady flow of students from Chile's Universidad Católica came to the University of Chicago to study economics. These students were known as the "Chicago Boys" and many went on to work for Pinochet. Arnold Harberger had a more substantial role in this initial stage of contact than Friedman, although the Chicago Boys were taught by Friedman and saw themselves as "Friedmanites."⁶³ Friedman and Harberger traveled to Chile together in March, 1975, less than two years after Pinochet became leader of the military junta. Friedman delivered

⁶¹ See Schliesser (2012) for details on Nutter and Harberger's approach to monopoly and competition. Schliesser (2012) argues that although Harberger was methodologically quite distinct from Nutter, their conclusions that monopoly was relatively insignificant (Harberger) and that it had not appreciably increased over time (Nutter) jointly provided the foundation for the Chicago perspective on competition. See Cherrier (2011, p. 343 and 360) for Nutter's impact on Friedman's own view of monopoly.

⁶² Hayek was at the Committee on Social Thought in his time at Chicago, not the Economics Department. Irwin (2018) notes that the interaction between Hayek and the Department of Economics was minimal.

⁶³ See Valdés (1995, p. 206) for a description of the Chicago Boys' strong identification with Friedman. Friedman (1977) provided an apt response to the at times absurd criticism of the training provided to the "Chicago Boys." Responding to critics, he asked "[d]o you seriously suggest that we should not accept or teach students who come from countries that may have repressive regimes *at some future date?*" (emphasis added).

two public lectures on the trip, and had an audience with Pinochet on March 21st. Pinochet requested that Friedman provide policy recommendations in writing after their meeting. The economist obliged, sending Pinochet a detailed letter outlining his proposal for “shock therapy” (Friedman and Friedman, 1998). For the rest of his career, Friedman was dogged by criticism of his contact with the Pinochet regime, both for his supposed validation of the regime’s crimes and for his recommendation of shock therapy. Friedman consistently maintained that he never supported the Pinochet regime itself, and Harberger points out that Friedman refused two honorary degrees from Chilean universities that received state funding because he did not want to be associated with the regime.⁶⁴

One of Friedman’s harshest critics was Orlando Letelier, a minister and ambassador under Allende who was exiled from Pinochet’s Chile after a year of imprisonment. It was Letelier who reviewed the Chilean Air Force’s purchase of the Lockheed C-130s through Nutter’s military assistance program, only to be shuttled by the same C-130s between prisons. Letelier (1976) pointed out in *The Nation* that while Friedman professed an opposition to dictatorial abuses, his policy proposals could only be implemented in Chile through repression. Without popular support for his policies, Letelier contended, Friedman was implicitly embracing the coercion that would be required to implement austerity and monetarism. Fellow Nobel laureates David Baltimore and S.E. Luria (1977) similarly described Friedman’s policy recommendations to Pinochet and the repressive means of implementing them as “inseparable aspects of the Chilean junta.” Eric Schliesser calls this Friedman’s “tacit endorsement of the benevolent dictator model of social engineering” (Schliesser, 2010, p. 188). Although Friedman, Baltimore, and Luria exchanged words in the pages of the *New York Times*, there was little opportunity to develop a fruitful dialogue with Letelier. A month after he criticized Friedman, Letelier was assassinated by agents of Pinochet’s National Intelligence Directorate in broad daylight on the streets of Washington, DC. One month after Letelier’s assassination, Friedman won the Nobel Prize, fueling further protests against his Chilean entanglements.

Arnold Harberger does not garner the same attention as Milton Friedman, but he was also instrumental in training and encouraging the Chicago Boys. Richard Just writes that Harberger “appears to have had a greater and longer-lasting impact on the economy of Chile as an economic advisor than any other economist has had on any country in history” (Harberger and Just, 2012, p. 2). He was a member of the first University of Chicago mission to Universidad Católica in June, 1955, and deepened his involvement in Chilean education and policy in subsequent decades. In 1964, he worked with the Chicago Boys to oust an uncooperative dean at the university and gain control of the department. Harberger’s students would go on to advise both the Frei and Pinochet governments, with greater success and influence under Pinochet than Frei (Valdés, 1995).

Harberger emphasizes three points to defend his Chilean work. First, he points out that the Chicago Boys originally functioned as advisors to the democratically elected Christian Democrats and President Frei, who preceded Allende in office. They were, he contends, a legacy of democratic

⁶⁴ For Friedman’s letter to Pinochet and Harberger’s defense of Friedman, see Appendix A of Friedman and Friedman (1998). See Naomi Klein (2007) for the quintessential example of the genre of criticism that both alleges Friedman’s support for the regime and targets his policy advice.

Chile that survived Pinochet's repression rather than an outgrowth of authoritarianism. Second, Harberger highlights the continuity between the corrupt practices of Allende's commissars and the practices of Pinochet's colonels. Finally, while his relationship with the Chicago Boys long predated the coup, Harberger points out that he refused to advise the Pinochet regime itself until its human rights abuses ended, a moratorium he claims to have maintained for five years, although he did meet Pinochet with Friedman in 1975 (Levy, 1999; Harberger, 2016).

James Buchanan has recently become more prominent in the literature on neoliberal economists and Chile, to a large extent due to the spotlight cast on him first by Fischer (2009) and more recently by MacLean (2017). Buchanan made two visits to Chile during Pinochet's rule: in May, 1980, for a week and in November, 1981, for a regional MPS meeting. On both occasions, Buchanan lectured on democracy and constitutional economics. MacLean (2017) contends that Buchanan's 1980 visit influenced the drafting of the euphemistically named "Constitution of Liberty," which gave significant power to the military and dramatically reduced the scope of democratic policymaking. Much of MacLean's (2017) evidence is circumstantial, although facially plausible given the constitution's severe restrictions on the scope of democratic governance. Nevertheless, Farrant (2019) presents new evidence demonstrating that Buchanan's role in the Constitution of Liberty was more apparent than real. His Chilean lectures in 1980 covered fairly basic public choice content rather than providing a detailed constitutional blueprint for his hosts. Moreover, Farrant (2019) shows that the constitutional provisions which might have been attributed to Buchanan's influence were drafted prior to his arrival in Chile.

Farrant and Tarko (2019) also identify serious deficiencies in MacLean's (2017) analysis of Buchanan's participation in the 1981 MPS meeting in Chile.⁶⁵ Far from justifying the regime, they show that Buchanan's lecture directly challenged Carlos Cáceres and other Chilean MPS members' fears of unlimited democracy. Buchanan considered the category of unlimited democracy a "null set" and doubted anyone would "seriously support" such a thing. A null set of unlimited democracy could not sustain Cáceres's arguments for dictatorship. Buchanan's views on the threat of unlimited democracy are diametrically opposed to Hayek (1978a, p. 153), who declared that "all democracy that we know today in the West is more or less unlimited democracy," and identified the United Kingdom as an example of a Western unlimited democracy.

Hayek's relation to Pinochet's Chile – which he visited in 1977 and 1981 – differed markedly from the cases of Friedman, Harberger, and Buchanan. He openly and repeatedly embraced the possibility of a "liberal dictator" or a transitional dictatorship (Farrant, McPhail, and Berger, 2012) and had the gall to write in the *Times of London* that "I have not been able to find a single person even in much maligned Chile who did not agree that personal freedom was much greater under Pinochet than it had been under Allende" (Hayek, 1978b). Although unlikely, Hayek's claim may be literally true, since his hosts would not have afforded the opportunity to ask the estimated 27,255 prisoners tortured by the National Intelligence Directorate about their personal freedoms under the

⁶⁵ Farrant (2019) and Farrant and Tarko's (2019) research was well underway prior to and independent of the publication of MacLean's book. See Caldwell and Montes (2015) for a detailed account of Hayek's minimal role in the planning for the regional meeting, which he did not attend. Hayek was originally asked to speak on "unlimited democracy," rather than Buchanan. Buchanan was asked to speak on taxes. When the organizers learned Hayek could not attend, Buchanan was asked to speak on "unlimited democracy" instead.

“much maligned” Pinochet. Farrant and McPhail (2014) aptly describe Hayek as being in a “wholesale state of denial” about human rights violations in Chile, despite receiving detailed intelligence on abuses from Ralph Raico and Gerald O’Driscoll (Farrant and McPhail, 2017).

Slobodian (2018, p. 277) notes that Hayek’s sympathy for Pinochet’s Chile has precedent in several of his European compatriots, including Wilhelm Röpke’s defense of white supremacist regimes in Rhodesia and South Africa, and Ludwig von Mises’s praise of fascist violence against Communists and police suppression of Austrian trade unions. Hayek’s willingness to entertain the idea of “liberal dictatorship” was by all accounts alien to Friedman, Harberger, and Buchanan. Meadowcroft and Ruger (2014) trace Hayek’s greater susceptibility to the temptation of a liberal dictatorship to his view that liberty and democracy are only instrumentally valuable (a point also highlighted by Caldwell and Montes, 2015), contrasting with Buchanan’s view of liberty and democracy as grounded in the fundamental worth of the individual.

Warren Nutter presents a different case entirely from his neoliberal economist peers. Pinochet came to power after Nutter left the Pentagon and there is no evidence that he was involved in Pinochet’s ascendance except through his earlier efforts to create a “coup climate.” Nutter never publicly embraced or even mentioned the Pinochet regime after it came to power. His relative silence was likely deliberate and strategic rather than an indication of disinterest in Chilean developments. It was public (although perhaps not common) knowledge that Nutter disbursed military assistance and facilitated arms sales to right-wing juntas across the world. Embracing the Pinochet regime would have raised questions about his work in the Pentagon and posed potential personal and legal liabilities at a time when the US was still officially disavowing any involvement in the 1973 coup.

Although he remained silent through Pinochet’s rise, as ASD-ISA Warren Nutter was involved in Chile policymaking at the highest levels of US government. He pushed Henry Kissinger, a man that many consider to be a war criminal, to be more confrontational with Allende. Even though Pinochet had not yet emerged as dictator, Nutter clearly understood that a dictatorship of some sort would replace the Unidad Popular coalition if his recommendation that the military overthrow Allende had been carried out.

Why did Nutter depart so radically from Buchanan, Harberger, and Friedman when dealing with Chile? The simple answer is that Nutter was a committed anti-Communist. The national press saw echoes of McCarthyism in Nutter’s anti-Communism, writing that he “cannot easily be accused of an indisposition to detect a Red peril” (Rosenfeld, 1969). There does not appear to be a worked out democratic theory behind his hope to “get a coup,” he was merely fighting Communist expansionism using every tool at his disposal. From 1969 to 1973, those tools included the US military assistance program, covert operations that he oversaw through the 40 Committee, and relationships with neighboring Latin American right-wing dictators and militaries.

Conclusion

This paper contributes an important new chapter to the history of neoliberal economists' relationship with Chile. It identifies Warren Nutter, a student of Milton Friedman and close colleague of James Buchanan, as a central player in US planning to overthrow Salvador Allende. Nutter's role is distinct from other neoliberal economists in that he was involved before the military junta came to power in 1973. Nutter never had to grapple with the ethics of directly dealing with Pinochet. But Nutter was also involved with Chile in a far more direct way than his Chicago school colleagues. He approved covert action against Salvador Allende as a member of the 40 Committee and advocated his overthrow through a military coup as a member of the SRG. After Allende was elected, Nutter was directly involved in putting continuous economic pressure on Chile to "make the economy scream" and create a "coup climate." Next to Nutter's direct involvement in the early 1970s efforts to overthrow Allende, Hayek's letters to the *Times of London* and Friedman's March, 1975 meeting with Pinochet seem trivial.

Melvin Laird committed to serving no more than four years as Secretary of Defense and when he left the Pentagon in early 1973 Nutter left with him, allowing the incoming Secretary to select his own assistant secretaries (Hunt, 2015). If Nutter had remained at the Pentagon through the end of 1973 he certainly could have been involved in whatever US government planning went into the successful coup that overthrew Allende. The extent of US involvement in the 1973 coup is still unclear. We know Nixon and Kissinger discussed having a hand in it, but few of the details of what that may have meant are declassified (Kornbluh, 2013). We know that the US continued to work towards a "coup climate" after 1970, and that Nutter was directly involved in those efforts.

Warren Nutter appreciated as well as anyone that his role in Chile could be revealed some day. He raised this possibility at the June 3rd, 1971 SRG meeting in response to Under Secretary of State John Irwin's naïve citation of public support for the Nixon administration's Chile policy. The transcript reads:

Mr. Irwin: I want to return to your remark about the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*. It is not only that these papers have been generally favorable to our Chilean policy. Throughout the country there hasn't been any criticism.

Dr. Kissinger: That's only because it's not yet dawned on people what's going on.

Mr. Nutter: There may be some later."

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