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Nota de Archivo: *Summary: This note, titled "USSR-Chile: Soviets Still Play Allende in Low Key," examined Moscow's friendly but aloof response to the election of Allende and argued that the Soviet Union was likely to increase efforts to reach out to Chile, especially in the event of an economic crisis. Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 15–1 CHILE. Secret; No Foreign Dissem. Prepared in the Office of USSR and Eastern Europe Affairs.*

USSR-CHILE: SOVIETS STILL PLAY ALLENDE IN LOW KEY

Moscow's friendly but not effusive public response to Congressional confirmation of Allende as President-elect seems to indicate a continuing go-slow approach in Soviet reaction to Chilean developments. Naming a Vice President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet (one of 15 such Vice Presidents), Georgiy Dzotsenidze, to head the Soviet delegation to Allende's inauguration indicates Moscow's desire to make an appropriate gesture of support toward the new President. However, Dzotsenidze is a second-echelon official lacking top party credentials, and he ranks lower in the Soviet hierarchy than the chief Soviet delegate to the Chilean Communist Party's two most recent congresses.

Moscow Plays It Cool. Soviet media continue to play the theme that Allende's election is a victory for all left-wing parties and "progressive" forces, downplaying the event as a socialist or communist triumph. Pravda has pictured the Unidad Popular (UP) program as a reasonable commitment to "profound transformations" and the development of "independent policies," without being too specific or attempting unduly to alarm Chile's "capitalists" and/or the US. Podgorny's brief, low-key congratulatory message to Allende made a pro forma appeal for "an ever wider development" of Soviet-Chilean relations, but was otherwise noncommittal.

No Precipitate Commitments. Some reports indicate Soviet reluctance to become substantially involved with the Allende government, at least in the early stages of its existence. A Soviet diplomat in Santiago reportedly cautioned that Allende should delay recognizing Fidel Castro until he can do so in concert with other Latin American countries, perhaps Peru and Bolivia, thereby avoiding unnecessary early difficulties for the UP administration. There are indications that the USSR does not want Chile to become dependent on trade with communist countries. Six months prior to the Chilean election two Soviet diplomats in Santiago reportedly said the USSR could not logistically support an Allende government, and expressed the view that the policies of such a government would be completely different from those of Havana.

Heavily committed to Cuba, as well as to Arab and Indochinese clients, and possibly constrained by its own domestic economic problems, the USSR is not anxious to underwrite Marxist experimentation in Chile. Moreover, Moscow seems to have concluded that it is still too early to predict the potential for success or failure of the UP program or of Allende's ability to survive. In these circumstances, Moscow apparently is advising the Chilean Communist Party to urge a gradualist UP approach, at least during the early months of the new administration. Specifically, the Soviets appear anxious that Washington not be unduly provoked by the Allende government as Chile begins the "transformation" process.

But Can Moscow Stay Out for Long? It will be some time before any pattern develops in Chile's new relationships with communist countries; therefore current speculation on their nature must be tentative. If, in implementing his program, Allende runs into serious economic difficulties and the West in his view is unresponsive, Moscow may receive appeals from the Chilean Government for substantial economic support. Much as Moscow might prefer to see "Marxism" installed in Chile without a heavy increment of Soviet material assistance, it alone of the world's communist powers (with the barely possible exception of China) has the potential to render such aid. While the circumstances under which Chile might request substantial Soviet assistance are unpredictable, Moscow might find it very difficult to refuse Chilean overtures given its commitment to advancing world "socialism."