

# Like Colombia, Chile is a US military proxy in South America

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In the 1990s the U.S. Department of State complied with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and released newly declassified and other documents related to events in Chile after Salvador Allende was toppled in 1973. The documents were related to human rights abuses, terrorism, and other acts of political violence prior to and during the Pinochet era in the country. Pinochet was outraged: how could they have done it, all his actions were taken upon the initiative of Washington and done with US support! Those days Pinochet was not the President of Chile anymore, though he remained the Commander-in-Chief of the Army till March 1998. The established and smooth running relationship with the Pentagon went derailed.

After the Alliance for Chile (Spanish: la Alianza por Chile) came to power, the Pentagon started to gradually restore its influence in the country. Joint naval maneuvers, arms sales, Chilean officers training on US soil. The incumbent President Sebastián Piñera's tenure is the period of a qualitative leap for the relationship with the US military. His father was a Chilean ambassador to the United States, his brother Jose was a cabinet minister in the Pinochet government, and both were close to the US intelligence. Sebastian Piñera remained faithful to the family tradition thinking that a stable relationship with Washington is a guarantee of a successful career.

In April 2012 a ceremony took place in Fort Aguayo, in Concon, in the Valparaíso region. A United Nations peacekeeping operations training center became operational. The construction was funded by the United States Southern Command. According to media leaks, the camp is used by Latin American military for honing their urban warfare and anti-guerrilla fighting skills. The course includes anti-protesters training.

It's acute for Chile: thousands hit the streets, including students, teachers, and white-collar workers. The Mapuche Indians in the south wage a ferocious fight for their historic land and the status of autonomy. The Chilean fighters for human rights don't exaggerate calling Concon a branch of the School of the Americas (now called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation). The enhanced interrogation techniques course still exists. It has become even more efficient thanks to experience received in the CIA's secret jails.

The Pentagon views Chile (along with Colombia) as the most reliable US partner. The Chilean Navy is responsible for the Southern Pacific. Normally it tracks drug traffickers. But there is a more important mission: watching the routes of Russian and Chinese surface ships and submarines. The fight for the resources of the Asia-Pacific has just started and Chile's

place was defined a long time ago. The Chilean intelligence is active in Latin American and Caribbean countries. After Pinochet, Chilean secret services focused on «populist countries» to serve the interests of the US Central Intelligence Agency and military intelligence. They watch Russian, Chinese and Iranian missions in the country and abroad. The top United States military leaders praise the Chile's Armed Forces for high state of combat readiness; they constantly say the Chilean military are by leaps and bounds better than their neighbors. The idea is that «the Chilean military match the highest NATO standards». As a result the Chilean Army, Air Force and Navy acquire US and Western European weapons systems. Russia constantly takes part in FIDAE, an International Air and Space Fair, that exhibits military, civilian and dual purpose technologies in Santiago de Chile, but it never achieved a real success. The Pentagon goes to any length to make any agreements doomed to failure. In 2010 Rosoboronexport concluded a deal with the Chileans (a political decision) on selling five Mi-17V5 helicopters. But an earthquake took place. It served as a subterfuge for the Chileans to backtrack (the US embassy pulled the strings at the top).

The US take advantage of the fact that since a long time the Chilean military considers Bolivia, Argentina and Peru as regional enemies. The Pentagon's policy is focused on driving a wedge in the relations between Chile and its neighbors. The policy brings results... Here are a couple of examples. The Chilean sailors jogging along the Viña del Mar outlying streets in the morning were a typical sight. It never attracted the attention of city dwellers and foreigners. The sailors changed their route once and stamped their feet beating the rhythm along the quay passing many tourists on the way with a marching chant. A student from Argentina had enough time to record it on video and post on you tube. The video went down with a bang and made a lot of noise. The sailors chanted, «I will kill Argentines, shoot Bolivians and slit the throats of Peruvians».

Argentina, Bolivia and Peru launched official protests. César Navarro, Bolivian deputy minister responsible for government coordination with social movements, was the first to react. He called on Latin Americans to condemn Chile for educating its military in the spirit of hatred towards neighbors. Peru and Argentina responded the same way.

The Chilean Minister of Defense had to recognize the sailors did really sing marching chants containing «hostile and offensive» insults against neighboring countries. Navy chief Edmundo Gonzalez and Deputy Defense Minister Alfonso Vargas said those responsible would be punished. He said Chile had been “a victim of similar situations in other countries and we didn't like it.” He added that the chant doesn't conform to Chile's peaceful neighborly relations.

The Chilean government has promised a speedy investigation into a viral video of its naval cadets that has offended three neighboring nations. “Without a doubt, they are shameful images,” Chilean government spokeswoman Cecilia Perez said. “These types of actions do not represent the good relations that our country has with the fellow countries mentioned, and the peace Chile has always wanted to achieve and maintain in our region.” But this was just a hot trail response, nothing else.

The incumbent Chilean government appears to be interested in permanently tense relations with neighbors. It probably thinks the policy serves the purpose of «consolidating the nation» on the home political front. Just recently Sebastián Piñera has done his best to make a serious interstate conflict out of the fact that three Bolivian conscripts armed with one FAL rifle crossed the Chilean border line. They pursued and detained stolen cars smugglers. The

Atacama Desert is not the best place to clearly see border lines. One of the smugglers gave a signal; the soldiers were arrested and brought to Iquique to stand trial before a civil court.

On 02.08.13 Bolivian La Razon wrote that hostility towards neighbors was kind of a doctrine for the Chilean Armed Forces. Actually it has not changed since the times of Pinochet's dictatorship. The coming and going democratic governments have all failed to drastically reform the military. The Chilean Armed Forces are a state within a state, a united, elitarian, reactionary power wielding group, the Chilean government never managed to establish full control over it.

Today the Ministry of Defense is headed by Rodrigo Hinzpeter. Before the present assignment his reputation had been seriously tarnished. He was accused of covering up the subversive activities of Central Intelligence Agency and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), a federal law enforcement agency under the United States Department of Justice, against the government of Ecuador. The new position gives him no less opportunity to do it. If lucky, he could spark a limited victorious war against Bolivia. Usually it all starts with small scale provocations and it's a long time the Chilean military is involved in sabre rattling.

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