

Chilean Analogy

To the Editor:

2/11/74 NYC
Having witnessed the events leading up to Allende's fall last September, I recognize many familiar events in contemporary America: a dissatisfied middle class (especially housewives), lines at gasoline stations, a fear of the press, a strong movement demanding the resignation of the President and a general weakening of the public confidence in the ability of the political process to meet the challenge of the civic traditions of the nation.

I have seen little comment concerning the impact on national security of a serious rift between the popular will and the President. As we know, in Chile the disharmony led the military to intervene. While we are far from a coup, I feel confident that policymakers in the Pentagon must consider national security in a broader context than merely guarding our borders against foreign foes. There must be contingency planning at the top echelons of the armed forces regarding the possible deterioration of institutional confidence in the U. S.

The Chilean experience is very instructive for the future of the U. S. Could the press not do investigative reporting on how military strategists view national security in the light of the polarization between the public and the press, on the one hand, and the President and his supporters on the other?

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New York, Jan. 31, 1974