

1980 Plebiscite Speech

Speech held on August 27th, 1980, in Teatro Caupolicán, on the occasion of the plebiscite.

After so many years, we meet again, gathered here. This is a solemn occasion. Today, we represent the historical continuity of our country, along with the will of an immense majority of Chilean men and women.

The reason and the importance of this reunion can be no greater than this. A plebiscite has been called upon for people to approve the text of a Constitution together with a number of temporary articles proposed by the current governors. Simultaneously, this plebiscite would serve to designate the same person who has been President for these last 7 years, for the Presidency of the Republic for a period of no less than 9 more years.

The Meaning of the Plebiscite

This Constitution, first created by a team designated by the governor, was then modified by the State Council, whose members were also assigned by the governor. Both of these groups assigned, accounted for a very limited sector of the citizenry. Finally, the Military Junta reviewed those texts and, as a result, provided an even worse version of the original proposals received.

If we compare what was stated in Chacarillas to the projects of the Constitutional Commission, and specially to the projects of the State Council, a clear setback can be observed; a situation that was thought to be impossible.

We should start by saying that one is the constitutional text itself, and the other document is the body of temporary articles.

The Constitution currently submitted to plebiscite would be instated in the year 1990. Accordingly, people would now vote for a project that would only be brought into force by the end of the decade.

During this lengthy period, temporary articles would mainly be in force, and according to these, the self-designated president, and the governing Military Junta shall concentrate the Constitutional, Executive, and the Legislative power.

Thus, they shall be allowed to modify the Constitution, submitting the reforms to plebiscite under the terms currently known. They would also be able to promulgate the interpretive and basic laws that complement this proposed Constitution. Among other decisive matters, these refer to: the Constitutional Court, the electoral system, and the *Tribunal Calificador*; the



organization of political parties; the operation of the Congress; the judicial power, the Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic; the Central Bank, and the regional and municipal governing bodies. In other words, the constitution of the most important institutions of the nation will reside in their hands.

For the following ten years there shall be no public election entity. Therefore, there shall be no Senate or House of Representatives, and Mayors shall not be elected by the people either.

During this period, the current Head of State shall be able to: autonomously declare a State of Emergency or Catastrophe; bring into force the power to arrest any person for a period of 5 days, and extend the arrest period to 15 days if, according to his opinion, acts of terrorism have taken place. This power of arrest would be enforced in six-month periods and considered as renewable. Also, The Head of State shall have the authority to restrict the freedom of assembly and the freedom of information; to prohibit Chileans to return to their own country, expel them from the national territory or exile them for up to three months. These measures shall not be liable to judicial remedies of any kind.

These are everything but strict legal norms. On the contrary, they affect the lives, safety, and liberty of every Chilean who will be deprived of their basic rights for this lengthy period.

Elections shall not be called at the end of this decade either. Pursuant to this project, the Commanders-in-Chief of the Armed Forces together with the Head of Carabineros, shall request all citizens to ratify the candidate who may become Head of State for the following 8 years, that is to say, until 1999, with the possibility of General Pinochet himself being proposed as Presidential candidate.

Then, the ratified President shall call for elections of senators and House representatives, within nine months following his designation, that is to say, within ten years from now.

If citizens were not to approve of the candidate proposed by the Military Junta, the Junta together with General Pinochet would remain in office for another year. Only then, Presidential and Congress elections would be called upon, and the principles of the proposed Constitution would come into full force and effect.

After learning the aforementioned conditions, a further analysis of others is, in our opinion, purely pointless.

To vote for this project that is illegitimate from its very origin and inconvenient in its writing; a project that will come into force within ten years from now; that will probably undergo

modifications during this decade, and whose real scope and meaning will only be known when the basic laws are promulgated, is either a science fiction case or a mockery.

The people of Chile will be held under civil interdiction for almost a quarter of a century, deprived from their civil rights. Those who were 18 years old in 1973, will be able to choose their authorities for the first time at the age of 42.

Never has there been, throughout the History of Chile, a record of a case such as this one; not even in terms of the time period mentioned or the accumulated powers. Neither did O'Higgins, Prieto nor Bulnes intend something, even slightly, similar.

This project is not even an attempt of transition, but an extension and a consolidation of the current personal power.

Basically, all of this is what is being submitted to this plebiscite.

We are not enemies of the plebiscite as a type of referendum; quite the contrary. Still, we wish for a true plebiscite. Totalitarian and dictatorial regimes use plebiscites according to such techniques, and their results are doubted by no one. There is not a single example in the whole world, I think, where they have ever lost a plebiscite.

This is the type of referendum we are being called to participate in.

This Plebiscite is not valid

This plebiscite lacks validity and we reject it since it fails to meet the minimum conditions guaranteeing its legitimacy.

– This plebiscite is not valid, since a plebiscite cannot be called upon in a country living under a State of Emergency.

– This plebiscite is not valid, since it would require an electoral system that guarantees the authentic expression of the people being confronted.

– This plebiscite is not valid, since there are no electoral lists and practically seven years have gone by since their destruction, which reveals the deliberate intention of not establishing them again.

– This plebiscite is not valid, since the polling places where the ballot reception and final count of votes shall take place are made up of people designated by mayors, who in turn, are designated by the Head of State.



– This plebiscite is not valid, since the entire vote calculation process and its results, in its first two phases, will be in the hands of the authorities. This is, first, of the mayor and his secretary, and then of the governor – all of them designated by the Executive Power.

The Constitutional law, recognized worldwide, states the conditions under which the voting scrutiny must be carried out. These are objective elements, so that the will of the people is respected. It is not about trusting or distrusting. No one can demand for this non-renounceable law to be delegated; a law that signifies a mechanism of control, accepted and recognized in all of the constitutional states; a matter traditionally dealt with through electoral laws, perfected by means of certain guarantees; guarantees which were initially requested by Chilean right-wing parties. For this purpose, a number of solutions were introduced and, subsequently, these were approved and then transformed into laws.

– This plebiscite is not valid, since political parties are proscribed. Thus, there can be no trustworthy agents to control voting and guarantee earnestness in the scrutiny of votes.

– This plebiscite is not valid, since there is no freedom of assembly or freedom of public demonstrations. The fact that I am standing here today is nothing but a very constrained and conditional exception.

– This plebiscite is not valid, since there is no freedom of information or expression. Dissidents have no access to television, which is the main communication instrument in our current world, and limited access to radio and press releases.

– This plebiscite is not valid, because these restrictions have increased to extremes since the referendum was called upon.

– This plebiscite is not valid, because the people live under a constant threat of either being arrested, relegated or kidnapped.

Therefore, let us not delude ourselves: the result of the plebiscite is predetermined.

The legitimation of power will not be attained through these methods. If the government were confident of its victory through free, open and informed elections, it would not turn to these methods, discredited by national and international public opinion.

Thus, a minority imposes a political, economic, and social formula over the great majority of the nation.



A False Alternative

But there is something else; something of extreme importance.

The Head of State has not only limited himself to present a Constitution; he has also assigned himself the task of defining what the alternative would be in case his project is disapproved.

According to the Head of State, if this Constitution is rejected, the country would be brought back to September 10th, 1973. This message, then, wishes to communicate that any Chilean who votes "NO" would be leading our country to chaos and disorder.

Thus, a false dilemma is set forth. Apart from silencing and attacking the great mass of opposers, he has then bestowed upon himself the right to create a parody of the alternative.

Supposedly, those who reject the proposed Constitution have the wish to return to the past. Still, not randomly to any moment of the past; but specifically to September 10th of 1973. What an absurd fiction! Why would we want to go back to the past? We who were openly and firmly part of the opposition, whilst others escaped abroad or kept a whimsical silence. Which country in the world can be brought back seven years into the past? Will the dead and the missing come alive? Will the thousands and thousands of people in exile return to Chile? Have these seven years, during which the regime has convinced no one, been in vain? Has nothing occurred in Chile? Has not the loss of freedom been a dramatic lesson? Haven't we Chileans already learned a lesson or two? Haven't the hundreds of thousands of unemployed Chileans, together with the economic crisis, with its terrible social toll, left a mark?

Bottom-line, the dilemma set forth by General Pinochet is: "Me or chaos". Democracy is not chaos. This country did not live in chaos. Those who are truly leading this country to chaos are those who, through moral and physical coercion, are setting forth an ineffective dilemma that may turn out to be fatal.

No one has the right to place the country in such a situation. Anyone who would truly reflect on this, at some given point would dismiss this alternative due to its absurd nature.

We will not return to the past. That is impossible.

Our wish is to look to the future and search for a rational, peaceful, and possible way out for Chile, so that our country does not stay in a state of regression, but continue evolving, according to its historical line.



An Anti-Historical Project

Approving this Constitution and its temporary articles is an option that contradicts the whole History of Chile. It is anti-History.

During its 170 years of republican life, our country has followed an evolutionary process; an upward path seeking to perfect democracy, to ensure liberty and the prevailing of rights, and to integrate all social classes in a progressive development.

This was the path chosen by Portales by the time the 1833 Constitution was promulgated. This was also the contribution by the Conservative Party as it organized the then nascent Republic. Subsequently, it was also the path of the liberal movement that gathered the ideas stirring the western societies in those days; ideas that found an echo in a pleiad of illustrious people who honored our past and made a significant contribution to the development of our country. Later on, it was the path taken by Radicalism, which brought to the foreground the middle classes that brought about a substantial transformation to the life of Chileans. Then, it was also the one chosen by the Christian Democracy, which expressed the new social demands, and sought to integrate the industrial workers, miners and farmers, and the marginalized. Left-wing movements, for their part, supported for many years the expectations of an important sector of the proletariat.

Thus, Chile grew, and turned into an exemplary country, widely admired and respected in the Americas, and recognized worldwide.

This process was not linear, undoubtedly. It was not free from mistakes, gaps and downfalls, since that is the human condition and the characteristic of all societies. But after each crisis, the country always moved ahead and never backwards.

As an effect of Lircay¹, a legitimate republic emerged. No dictatorship followed the 1891 revolution, but the prompt establishment of a State of Right. In 1893, two years after a civil war, elections were called upon. National reconciliation was so truthful, that by 1906 the liberal-democrat party, which represented the defeated, became the first political force in the country.

In the year 1925, when the parliamentary system came into crisis, a new Constitution was created – in an ample and open debate – by a commission comprised of all of the political forces in Chile, even outstanding figures from the military movement.

¹ Translator's note: the word *Lircay* refers to the Battle of Lircay in 1830.



Former President Ibañez, designated by elections, governed less than four years. He resigned, in spite of having the unquestionable support of the Armed Forces, to prevent the shedding of Chilean blood – as he stated. After a brief period, the Constitution which has ruled our country for about 50 years came to be in full force and effect, which is a considerable amount of time, given the turbulent and changing world we currently live in.

All of these experiences continually gathered throughout this evolutionary line shaping our existence as a nation.

Chile was not born from oppression or *caudillismos*². The backbone of our essence has always been Liberty, the Constitutional State, and democracy, all of which remained even during times of war.

Political parties and civil governments were a reflection of the national opinion, and our Armed Forces were always of the highest standards, whose leaders, once they triumphed, did not plan new coup d'état; instead, they provided a constant example of dignity and respect towards democracy.

Chile, although deficient in resources when compared to other countries, experienced increased economic development in accordance with those times, and reached the third highest per capita income in Latin America. It put forth a solid effort in social development that went on to create a fair and modern society, stable institutions, universities that exercised influence and had important prestige throughout the continent. It was a country of scientists and of a great cultural development. During those years, which are currently disparaged, a Chilean man and a Chilean woman were awarded with the Nobel Prize. In those years, our country was respected around the world.

² Translator's note: the word *Caudillismo* refers to the leadership or the rule of a "caudillo" (a person leading an army or a community). However, the concept is also understood as the abuse of power exerted by an authority figure.



We will not return to September 10TH

Why would we go back to September 10th of 1973, instead of retrieving that historical line and project it into the future?

A crisis, however serious it might have been, does not represent the past, nor can it erase it. Chile was not a country in decadence, as it is currently portrayed in an attempt to distort our entire history.

The fact that there had been a critical period comes as no surprise. Other nations, even the most powerful ones, have encountered the bitterest dilemmas, as well.

This has been the case of France, Germany, and Italy, and other Western nations. After tragic events and seemingly insolvable rifts and wounds, they all recovered, placing their trust in their people, and holding no fear for liberty. No pretexts were sought in order to subjugate their own, but rather to free them.

The opposite example is found in history, from the czars to Iran, and recently in Central America, where the political extremism of one color or the other has spread death, making peace impossible. These regimes have justified their violence by stating that their aim is to guarantee "order" and to "eliminate Communism", only to end up plunging their people into chaos. What a paradox! Throwing them into the hands of the very ones they were going to exterminate.

This was the path followed by the Batistas and the Somozas. This cannot be the path of Chile.

The path of Chile was and must be one that befits one of the oldest and strongest democracies worldwide. It can and must be, once again.

We are certain that by pretending to extend the current regime for years, we are being steered into a dead end situation.

During these months the country has clearly witnessed a harder regime. And that, regardless of what is said, is the result of the non-existence of a political project; the lack of a true formula for a transition. No agreement has been settled with the people or with social groups. The one thing that has been offered is nothing but the prolongation of a repressive regime. It has all been arranged to attack and defeat others, not to unify or to settle a national coexistence project.



Paths to peace

Seven years have gone by, during which, there has been a wish to eradicate any opposition or threat to “order”. Curiously, they have intensified. Such acts have currently grown more menacing. Not only have those from the extreme left wing increased, but also those from within the regime itself, as it has been acknowledged by those who have held the highest positions in the government.

Who could guarantee that in five, ten or twenty years from now this situation will improve?

Worldwide experience has proven, without exception, – and we repeat, without a single exception – that however long the repressive regimes are lengthened, political extremism and more so, violence seekers, have remained unscathed.

The project submitted to the plebiscite bespeaks the spirit inspiring its authors: They do not really believe the people of Chile are able to think, state their opinion, decide and choose. Their provisions lead to a preventive and coercive system that shall rule for almost 25 years. This is what pushes us into rifts, extremism, violence and chaos.

All of its contents reveal an unlimited trust on power concentration mechanisms, and distrust – also unlimited – on the people, the Parliament, the political parties, community-based organizations, and even on the municipalities themselves.

We are aware of the need for a vigorous authority, an authority that is able to govern. However, the autocratic caesarism is something quite different.

The core problem is that no institution or law can act accordingly if they fail to represent the will of the majority of a nation, authentically and freely expressed.

No close-door restraints imposed to resist the legitimate expression of the people can remain steady. No scheme will work if there is no basic consensus on fundamental values allowing for a rational way of coexistence.

The only rational way of saving the country from violence, hate and revenge, is for that consensus to be carried out as soon as possible.

Maintaining a force-based regime continually, one that is supported only by a minority, will unavoidably aggravate the conflict, deepen the rifts among Chileans, and most likely – and



examples are many – this will hasten the country into another force-based regime, an opposite one. That is to say, the pendulum will go on swinging from side to side.

Imposing a formula as the one proposed, means that the conflict will grow in response to the inevitable dynamics of this tragic cycle of repression and protest, which can only benefit violence seekers from one extreme or the other. As a result, we will find ourselves heading for increasingly difficult situations, and an ever-deepening division among Chileans.

Under these conditions, dialogue and consensus will be impossible; with each passing day, reconciliation and peace will be further beyond our reach.

Our entire effort is in preventing positions from becoming more radical, and preventing the paths to peace from being destroyed.

Safety and peace cannot be the fruit of unceasing operations and house raids or searching neighborhoods thoroughly for delinquents, only to later find that they were in other organizations.

There is no safety for millions of Chileans under these conditions, and even more so as the protection and the most basic constitutional guarantees are now gone.

We do not mean that crime, violence, terrorism and corruption should not be fought against vigorously. However, human progress has consisted in doing so in accordance with the law, through acts carried out by authorities who have been elected by the people; acts that shall confront those social problems with democratic methods, not terror.

For that reason, we reject this constitutional project and the plebiscite, as we are confident that it leads us into a dead end conflict, since it contradicts the essence of our national identity. In addition, this exposes us to the world in a position that can only elicit sarcasm or pity.

The True Alternative

The true alternative is not going back to September 10th, 1973, but to find a path leading us back to what we once were: a free and democratic Homeland; one with renewed institutions in accordance with the new reality and the new demands.



Based on these reasons, we come to propose an alternative for Chile; an alternative that can enable it to return to an appropriately renewed democracy.

Bearing this purpose in mind, we consider the following as necessary:

— The immediate organization of a temporary civic-military government whose basic aims shall be: establishing in a two-to-three-year period, at most, the conditions for the healing of past wounds; the reestablishment of unity and peace among Chileans; the retrieval of the full exercise of democracy and the guarantee of domestic and foreign safety for Chileans. During this period of transition the government shall maintain legislative powers.

— Once such transitory government is established, a Constituent Assembly shall be elected by public vote – or another organization authentically representative of all of the currents of opinion within the country, as it occurred in 1925. Such organization shall be in charge of the elaboration of a project to modify the Constitution. This project shall then be submitted to a plebiscite – under a system providing absolute guarantees, options clearly identified and full freedom of expression.

— The progressive and prompt reestablishment of public liberties, freedom of association, freedom of opinion and information, freedom of assembly, the return of exiles, and the repeal of the State of Emergency.

However, freedom of opinion and information shall be immediately restored with the limitations that were present in the ordinary legislation.

— The immediate promulgation and enforcement of an Electoral Law defining the requisites for citizenship, and that regulates: electoral registration, voting systems and the scrutiny of votes, organizations and Courts with autonomy from the provisional government. The latter shall be in charge of ensuring the correctness of the procedures.

Apart from that, In Chile, the electoral system in force – praised by all of the parties, without exception – ruled under the shelter of the Law and with the presence of the Armed Forces during the process of the elections.

— The promulgation of a Statute to regulate the functions of Political Parties and their involvement in the political life of the country during the transitional period and until the new Constitutional Charter is promulgated.



During this transitional period the action of the political parties would be limited to their collaboration in the political life of the country during the transitional period and until the Constitutional Charter is promulgated.

During this transitional period, the action of political parties would be limited to: their collaboration to the organism elaborating the new constitutional project, the structure of their internal branch offices, and the work performed by their technical and political teams to elaborate the programs that shall be proposed to the citizenry once institutional normality is reestablished.

— The abolition, in the social order, of the restrictions imposed on the trade unions, *juntas de vecinos*³ and other intermediate social institutions. The definite statutes shall be promulgated by the time the future democratic government takes office.

— The end of the intervention in universities by means of a procedure led by academics of prestige and irreproachable records, able to give full guarantee to the university community as a whole.

— The creation of a national consensus or a social pact guaranteeing a peaceful and violence free democratic cohabitation, and enabling its future development.

A National Agreement

I am confident that these general bases shall allow for the possibility of a great agreement involving the people of Chile, and the Armed Forces; institutions that belong to Chile and must not be engaged with certain political or economic formulas. In our history, they were never biased, and that is why they were always worthy of universal respect.

An illustrious General wrote in *Recuerdos de un Soldado*: “a dictatorship, whether it is legitimate or illegitimate, distresses the spirit of citizens, overall, the spirit of those who have a clear conscience”.

This is the suitable path for workers, young people, intellectuals in need of a horizon; this is also the advisable path for Chilean women, who long for peace and safety, and business men, whose contributions are essential.

³ Translator's note: “*Juntas de vecinos*” refers to community organizations which, in collaboration with the State and municipalities, aim for the development of the community.



The creation of employment opportunities and a decrease in the unemployment plunging thousands of homes into anguish and despair is seen, by the whole country, as an immediate task.

The whole country is anxiously witnessing the middle class falling apart.

The whole country believes it is necessary to defend national industry, mining, and agriculture.

The changes that the economic world is going through, the pressing need for exporting, for opening our economy and ending the excessive protectionism and the excessive monopolies are not ignored by anyone. Still, it is something quite different to submit a country like ours to competition under conditions that even the most powerful nations would fail to accept and endure.

This country knows well enough that the current state of affairs of the world economy is very different, and its people are neither insensitive nor incapable of assessing the new realities.

Only under the conditions previously exposed an open dialog, able to perfect and add other basic proposals, can be settled.

The immense majority of Chileans wish to live in peace and order; they want their rights to be respected, and they want fear to fade away.

We are equally confident that that great majority understands the need for a fundamental consensus that allows for a reconstruction of our democratic life.

Three examples would suffice to support this statement.

A commission – called *Comisión de los 24* – including participants from all walks of life, elaborated the principles of a democratic Constitution, reaching a full agreement on its provisions.

A few days ago, 120 people, including: university professors, men of science, writers, politicians with irreproachable pasts, expressed their thoughts to the country. Their prestige and their names guarantee that there are Chileans able to safeguard our future, and new and prized adherents are joining them.



Representative Leaders from the guild association world have expressed, in a recent manifesto, their willingness to attend to the signing of a socio-political pact allowing for a government in peace and tranquility.

Democracy is not chaos

We can affirm in the most categorical terms: democracy is not chaos.

There are moral and political powers in Chile that do not accept it. They are the overwhelming majority of Chilean women and men. Likewise, there is the moral power of the Catholic Church with its immense prestige, and that of other religious creeds worthy of the highest respect.

The people do not want disturbances and – we repeat – there is no reason for anyone to believe the people are not able to think and act sensibly.

The Armed Forces do not want chaos either. They would not permit it.

No one wants it.

However, the formula proposed to concentrate the whole of power in the same hands entails, regardless of what is said, unceasing instability.

A country cannot live in fear of what would happen if it goes back to normal; the fear by some of repression, and by others of revenge, cannot be the principle of a stable and peaceful society.

We are aware that returning to democracy entails risks and uncertainty that are unavoidable in every nation and regime. But, the continuity of the current system will lead the country, sooner or later, to an utterly chaotic situation.

As we set forth this alternative we are not inspired either by partisan or personal purposes.

Some state that we proceed likewise out of greed; yet, they are the ones wishing to remain in power indefinitely. I will not follow them into such a sterile debate. And I am also aware that we will be the focus of all types of personal attacks, falsehood and lies from those who harness the entire power, for setting forth our stance.

What I can affirm in the most solemn way, is that I do not aspire to anything. I have been granted all of the honors a man can achieve. I have devoted my whole life to defend my ideas. I



have made mistakes, surely, but I have followed a line I can exhibit to the country, and the country will eventually form a thorough opinion, despite all the sophistries.

I categorically declare, that I am unconditionally willing to support, with no personal aspirations, the type of transition I have stated or any other that meets the essential requisites for the cause of democracy; a cause that is also the cause of Chile.

General Pinochet has made a proposition. We, on behalf of thousands of Chileans, have set forth this alternative, because we want – and we repeat – a rational and peaceful way out for our Homeland. We do not wish for hatred or for revengeful intentions in our Homeland. We do not want any type of violence.

We ask not to be judged based on prejudices, but to be heard before it is too late.

A Necessary Debate

That is why we insist, in spite of the recent negative, on being allowed to present this opinion by means of Televisión Nacional, which was installed during my administration throughout Chile to be used by all Chileans.

The occasion in which we make this request is not just any occasion. During the elections held in 1970, all of the candidates were able to appear in the television channels. This plebiscite is as much or more important than a presidential election.

Furthermore, I think that a direct debate with the head of State would be extremely useful and illustrative. These debates are common in all of the great democracies. Just now, the President of the United States has offered a public debate with his opponent.

I am only a citizen, it is true, but the people have granted me titles: they chose me once – with an absolute majority – as President of the Republic and later, with the first majority again, I came to be part of the Senate, of which I was appointed president.

If the proposal I am setting forth were to be approved, it would be a consequent response to the democratic tradition of Chile and it would contribute to clarify the meaning of the different options offered and the nature of the plebiscite we are being called to participate in.

Chile is not interested in crushing dissidents; it is interested in proving to the country that it is right.



A True Plebiscite and a True Alternative

Chilean people:

All of the men and women of Chile are aware that the issue we are dealing with shall have deep consequences in their future, the future of their homes and their children.

That is the reason why we have spoken firmly, responsibly and moderately. Our words are even addressed to those who fight us. We ask them to think of the country, we ask them not to become bewildered by personal opinions.

In these last days, the Episcopate has set forth a series of conditions allowing for the assurance of moral integrity in the plebiscite.

The "Grupo de los 24" has done so as well.

Last week, over one hundred highly qualified people asked, in similar terms, for the country not to be led into a plebiscite without sufficient guarantees.

The leaders of important guild associations have adopted the same stance.

Today, gathered in this theatre, thousands of men and women express the same.

What is that we ask for? Only two clear and simple things:

Firstly, we ask for the plebiscite to meet all of the essential requisites aforementioned so that it can be valid. These requisites have been recognized as sine qua non conditions to be deemed appropriate.

Secondly, we ask for clearly defined alternatives to be set forth.

As for us, in response to the proposition from the government we formulate a well-defined alternative: the return to democracy through a transitional government.

Our country is waiting for an answer.

If these proposals are not responded to or are rejected, this plebiscite shall hold no validity, nor will their results.

We wait for an answer that could clear a peaceful path.

Let us not continue splitting the country into patriots and anti-patriots, good and evil people, for this will certainly lead to a catastrophe.



If, by misfortune, all the doors are shut closed, then, on September 11th we will vote NO.

Results might be imposed; but as a great Chilean once said, referring to the person in office at that time: "You can do anything you want the way you want: you have the power. But what you will fail to do is inspire trust." Today, we say the same.

The people will be forced to vote. They cannot risk 60 days in prison or paying a six-thousand-pesos fine. Furthermore, without the stamp on their identity card, they run the risk of losing their job and facing thousands of more problems.

The people have already decided to vote NO, even when they are aware that they will have no truthful control measures over the scrutiny of the votes. Thus, no one builds his hopes up about the results.

Their NO will be unequivocal; NO to the plebiscite itself and all of what it signifies.

Thus, this will be a testimony before their own conscience and their own Homeland.

This conscience will continue to grow after the 11th, and its profound march shall not be halted.

Translated by Omar Silva M. (2009).