Session 11: The Breakdown of Chilean Democracy

Handout: Chilean Chronology (abridged)

September 4, 1970 Socialist leader Salvador Allende wins election (36% of vote)
November 2, 1970 Allende takes office
September 11, 1973 Coup d’état overthrows Allende; 3,000-10,000 deaths
1973-1977 General Augusto Pinochet emerges as leader of military government
January 4, 1978 Pinochet orchestrates plebiscite confirming his authority
August 10, 1980 New Constitution promulgated; calls for plebiscite on return to civilian rule in 1988
1983-1985 Unsuccessful protests in favor of a return to democracy
1987 Registration begins for referendum; opposition forms broad front
October 5, 1988 Pinochet loses plebiscite (55% to 43%), forcing presidential elections
1989 Presidential campaign; Center and Left allied against the regime
December 15, 1989 Opposition alliance under Patricio Alwyn wins presidential elections with 55%; Pinochet remains Commander-in-Chief
March 11, 1990 Pinochet’s last day in office
December 1994 Eduardo Frei (representing Center-Left coalition) elected President
March 10, 1998 Pinochet retires as Commander-in-Chief of Armed Forces; takes post as Senator-for-Life
October 16, 1998 Pinochet arrested in Great Britain on orders of Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón
January 17, 2000 Ricardo Lagos (representing Center-Left coalition) elected President in close run-off against conservative Joaquín Lavín (51% to 48%)
March 2, 2000 Pinochet released on health grounds; returns to Chile