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WOOTEN: Despite the rising sound and fury, Chile remains firmly in the grasp of Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, the army general who seized power in 1973 with the blessings and the help of the CIA. In a bloody coup, the elected president, Marxist socialist Salvador Allende, died and the country's long tradition of open democracy was replaced by a military regime that's still marching to its own music under the baton of President Pinochet. The United States is no longer quite as fond of him, mainly because his record on human rights is abysmal. But that is of no concern to an unelected president whose word is law, whose power absolute. There is no national congress anymore. It was dissolved years ago and it's been locked up tight ever since. There are no legal political parties. They were outlawed years ago. And, of course, there hasn't been an election for public office in Chile since well before the coup. And three weeks ago, on the day Americans were voting for president, this president was imposing a state of siege on Chile. Now all news is censored, a nighttime curfew is in effect and the national police have been arresting thousands of young men in Santiago's slums. All necessary, the president says, to save Chile from the terrorism of communist revolutionaries. But few Chilean leftists have escaped assassination or exile. And the president's critics say his harsh measures are meant to silence growing public protest over his one-man rule and the miserable state of Chile's economy. GABRIEL VALDEZ (Christian Democrat): ...while this was always what the fascists said when there is opposition in the country, this happened with Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy and with Batista and Somoza.

WOOTEN: Gabriel Valdez, a centrist politician, has been jailed twice. Ricardo Lagos, a socialist, is under secret police surveillance. RICARDO LAGOS (socialist): I'm afraid that if this situation continues, this will end up in a sort of violence increase in Chile and we may end up very much like in Central America.

WOOTEN: And now, as in Central America, the Catholic Church has added its voice to the chorus of government opposition. Archbishop Juan Francisco Fresno has sternly criticized the repression and the state of siege. But President Pinochet says he will run Chile his way for at least five more years or perhaps longer, until there is no more opposition. But the roots of Chile's once healthy politics run deep. And those voices in the street are saying that five more years is too long to wait for democracy's return. Jim Wooten, ABC News, Santiago.