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President Ricardo Lagos and his wife, Luisa Durán, during their visit to the Taj Mahal.

A trip to three continents

President Ricardo Lagos' visits to Egypt, India, and Germany had a concrete aim: building dialogue with countries that can help Chile fulfill its enormous potential for economic and cultural development. In the case of Egypt, an added objective was to strengthen ties with the Middle East: Chile's participation in the UN Security Council (2002-2004) involved the country more directly in that region's issues and the search for ways to cooperate within an atmosphere of peace and stability.

After meeting in Cairo with President Hosni Mubarak – with whom he signed cultural and technical cooperation agreements –, President Lagos made a presentation to the 22 Arab League representatives, in which he emphasized the importance of closer ties with Latin America. The League incorporated Chile as an “observer nation,” a status of great significance to the country, which is home to some 450,000 residents of Arab descent.

The President expressed strong support for the creation of a Palestinian state “enjoying the world's respect and consideration,” as well as coexistence with the State of Israel within secure and internationally-recognized borders.

President Lagos' stop in India, where he traveled accompanied by a delegation of 60 businesspeople, was dedicated above all to technological and business issues. In Mumbai, he participated in business seminars; in New Delhi, he met with government officials and opposition leaders, and laid a floral offering at the memorial to Mahatma Gandhi.

Then, along with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, he presided over the signature of a Framework Agreement which will reduce tariffs on exports of approximately 400 products, starting in September. And in Bangalore, considered “India's Silicon Valley,” he visited the biotechnology firm Biocom, as well as the high-tech center Infosys.

In Germany, he met with President Horst Köhler and Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, after which he emphasized the ratification in December of Chile's treaty with the EU, the final step for its full entry into force: “Our relations are at an optimal level. We hope that they will continue to advance, thanks to the very significant support you have given us.” President Lagos also gave an address on “Multilateralism and the Reform of the International System” to the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, linked to Germany's Social Democratic Party, and received an honorary doctorate from the University of Leipzig. He also took the opportunity to visit Bach's gravesite in that city.

A “tank” to the OAS

In Chile, the press calls him “The Tank,” in recognition of his integrity, self-confidence and astute political management. Since 1990, Interior Minister José Miguel Insulza has held high offices in all three Concertación administrations, serving as Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister Secretary-General of the Presidency as well as Minister of the Interior, who also serves as Vice President in the absence of the President of the Republic.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ★ During the balmy summer season, one of the most popular attractions is Chile's largest theater festival: Teatro a Mil. During January, companies from more than 14 countries, comprising over 500 actors, put on 60 performances on Santiago's streets and in its theaters. The audience numbers more than 130,000.
- ★ “Rayén”, “Ancatú”, and “Guacolda” are the names of three condors which will be freed on January 29, thanks to the Binational Program for the Conservation of the Andean Condor, administered by Chile and Argentina. The aim is to help these majestic birds readapt to life in the wild.
- ★ Studying climate change and global warming during the past 200 years was the objective of the First Joint Scientific Expedition to the South Pole, composed of a team of 41 people who remained in the Antarctic just over two months. With this mission, Chile became the first Latin American country to use its own resources – two million dollars – to successfully undertake a study of this kind.

FACTS

A report from Human Rights Watch, released on January 13, pointed to Chile as an example for Latin America, emphasizing the enormous progress exhibited by the country's efforts to confront the atrocities committed in the past. Examples include the prosecution of military officials accused of committing human rights violations during General Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship, the new Criminal Procedure Code, and the report from the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture.

On January 1, the official workweek in Chile was reduced in from 48 to 45 hours, with the entry into force of the most recent provisions of the country's Labor Reform.



Chile exhibits the lowest incidence of money laundering in Latin America, according to the latest report published by the International Development Bank (IDB), which ranks the country in 67th place among a total of 80 nations.

The results of Chile's Socioeconomic Characterization Survey (Casen), released on January 11, revealed that more than six million Chileans have access to a computer, while 4,115,181 use the Internet as a tool for communication, information retrieval, and interaction with government offices. These figures place Chile in Latin America's most favorable position with regard to the use of the new information technologies.



Sixty percent of Chileans believe that the country enjoys more power in the world than before, according to the fifth Human Development Report, published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The interviewees – more than 200 members of the country's elite – view Chile as an active participant in globalization, playing a more prominent role in international affairs.

He now hopes to carry his experience to the OAS. In search of a “more just, prosperous and secure” hemisphere, he has presented what he defines as a “candidacy of State” to the Secretary-General. His starting point is the challenge of restructuring the organization, with a view toward promoting and strengthening hemispheric cooperation.

He defines his platform as being focused on promoting democracy and good governance, as well as cooperation in the fight against corruption and illicit drug trafficking, with greater participation on the part of civil society. In the area of security, he has stated that “we will advance the effective application of the multidimensional focus set forth in the Declaration on Security in the Americas, signed in Mexico in 2003.”



In the economic sphere, his main objective is “to work to eliminate extreme poverty and to promote economic growth with equity and sustainable social development.” At the same time, he maintains, the OAS “must enhance the mechanisms for hemispheric cooperation and facilitate the smaller economies' full participation in trade negotiation processes – particularly for the FTAA – as well as their integration into the global economy.”

José Miguel Insulza, 61, is married, has three children and one grandchild. An attorney, he holds a Master's degree in political science from the University of Michigan and has served as a professor at universities in Chile and abroad.

Overwhelming public support

From north to south, Chileans have given a solid vote of approval to President Ricardo Lagos' administration. In at least five public opinion surveys, carried out by institutions representing various parts of the political spectrum, positive evaluations reached levels higher than 50%.

The poll taken by the Center for Public Studies (CEP), showed a 61% support rate for the President, the highest registered by the Center during the three Concertación administrations. The figure is three points higher than the previous measurement, in June 2004.

The respondents to the survey undertaken by the Future Foundation selected the President as Person of the Year, while 49% of those polled by Chile 21 stated that his nearly five years of leadership “have been better than expected.” If the 33.7% who believed the government has been “as good as expected” are added, the positive opinion rate exceeded 80%.

The poll taken by the Center for Contemporaneous Studies (CERC) achieved results similar to those mentioned above, showing a 62% approval rate for the President's leadership and a good reception (47%) for his human rights proposals. In turn, IPSOS Chile reported that fully 73.2% of its respondents characterized the administration's management as “good” or “very good.”

Public opinion surveys have also reflected positive views of the Concertación coalition's precandidates, former Minister of Defense Michelle Bachelet and former Foreign Minister Soledad Alvear. In a poll by IPSOS comparing each of them with opposition candidate Joaquín Lavín, Bachelet captured 64.5% of preferences and Alvear 53.3%, with Lavín obtaining 28.7% and 33.5%, respectively.



QUOTATIONS FROM THE PRESIDENT

"I have spoken about the subject with Presidents Chávez and Uribe, and I have indicated to them our willingness to help in the search for a higher level of consensus."

On the Chilean government's offer to mediate in the conflict between Venezuela and Colombia .
Berlin, January 25, 2005

"Multilateral affairs are a very central topic in our foreign policy. The world is undergoing a globalization process, but we do not want globalization that lacks clear, defined and fair rules."

After meeting with German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. Berlin, January 24, 2005

"He was a man who inspired India, but he also inspired the world. It has been a privilege to come here and to tread the path that Gandhi took for the last time, in the conviction that intolerance must be defeated in the long run. In this twenty-first century, which is beginning with such clear signs of fundamentalism, I hope we will find inspiration in Gandhi."

In placing a floral offering at Mahatma Gandhi's Memorial.
New Delhi, January 20, 2005

"This is the future, and Chile must dare to seize the future. And the role of someone from the public sphere is to create spaces for you, so that business opportunities will open up."

Upon arrival in Mumbai, India.
January 18, 2005

"Chile is open to the world; we are already partners with the European Union, and we would also like to be partners with this region."

At a special session of the Arab League.
Cairo, Egypt. January 17, 2005

"Here we can see the confirmation of the public will to pursue a national project, which includes many aspects, but which is especially related to the way we understand development in the twenty-first century, how sovereignty is achieved, how the most isolated sectors can be reached, and how we can use the gifts of nature in the service of human beings, while also preserving the environment. This is the challenge."

On the creation of the Corcovado National Park, in the Tenth Region.
January 6, 2005

Impressive growth

In 2004, Chilean exports took an enormous leap forward, reaching twice the value recorded in 1998. During this six-year period of sustained growth, sales abroad expanded from 16 billion dollars to 32 billion.

Exports increased by 52% in comparison with 2003, while the country's trade balance also achieved a high-water mark, reaching a surplus of 9.044 billion dollars, triple that of the previous year.

And although the 90% increase in copper shipments was the driving force behind the growth, the pace of expansion registered by other exports (30%) is unprecedented in the country's recent trade history.

These figures demonstrate the Chilean economy's enormous capacity for expansion in response to the increased opportunities offered by the international market during the past year, as well as the benefits of the Free Trade Agreements with several countries.



Protection and respect

A new legal standard has been put in place to reinforce the government's efforts to protect workers. The law, approved after 13 years of debate in Congress, is the first to place specific sanctions on sexual harassment. It is expected to enter into force by May.

The new framework incorporates sexual harassment into the Labor Code, classifying it as a serious offense that represents grounds for dismissal without the right to compensation. The law specifies that businesses failing to follow appropriate procedures will be held responsible for harassment of subordinates occurring within their organizations, for which they will be subject to fines as well as compensatory payments to the victim.



The new law establishes simple and direct procedures for pursuing an accusation of harassment. Employers will have five days to undertake an investigation or send data to the Labor Authority, and the investigation must be completed within 30 days. Later, the company will have 15 days to take corrective measures.

The law also includes sanctions for those who initiate false complaints: they are required to provide compensation to the accused, while also remaining exposed to criminal prosecution, as with other types of false accusations.

Toward real reintegration

A program that is unique in Latin America has proved successful at Valparaiso's prison, while providing a group of 22 convicted criminals with the chance to regain their hope and self-confidence. The convicts are the first graduates of the Cardinal Oviedo Professional-Technical School for Adults, a pilot program currently training 423 inmates – nearly one-fourth of the port city's prison population – as electrical technicians or metalworkers.



OVERHEARD

"German-Chilean relations are good, with no pending difficulties, which has allowed us to address other topics of interest on the international level."

Gerhard Schroeder, Chancellor of Germany.
Berlin, January 24, 2005

The Chilean President "has effectively demonstrated how the freedom of information can be recovered after it has been subject to arbitrary power."

Franz Haeuser, rector of the University of Leipzig.
Leipzig, January 25, 2005

"We know that Chile has one of the largest Palestinian communities outside the Arab world, and it can play the role of helping create closer ties with Latin America."

Nabil Shaath, Foreign Minister of the Palestinian Authority. Cairo, January 17, 2005

"Chile must be congratulated, because it is moving forward with a reform based on the principles of access and equality."

Fredrick Lennartsson, Swedish representative to the International Forum on Common Access to Health Care. Santiago, January 19, 2005

"Chile has liberalized strategically: whether unilaterally, bilaterally or multilaterally, it has pragmatically evaluated the best way to maximize the benefits. It has sought to create a feedback loop with the industrialized countries, and this has had a very positive impact."

Axel van Trotsenburg, World Bank representative for Chile.
Santiago, January 17, 2005

CHILEANS AROUND THE WORLD

The Los Angeles World Affairs Council selected Chile's ambassador to the United States, Andrés Bianchi, as Diplomat of the Year, in recognition of his role in the process leading to the signing of the Free Trade Agreement between the United States and Chile.

With his article "La sangre de un poeta," dealing with the assassination of singer-songwriter Víctor Jara, Chilean Cristóbal Peña won the Grand Prize in the 2004 Lorenzo Natali competition, held by the European Commission to honor journalists who have distinguished themselves in the defense of human rights.

Spanish-Chilean director Alejandro Amenábar was awarded a Golden Globe for *Mar adentro*, in the Best Foreign Film category. It has also received an Oscar nomination for Best Foreign-Language Film.

Throughout January, the cinema Le Latina in central Paris paid homage to documentary filmmaker Patricio Guzmán, organizing a film festival in honor of his work, "which focuses on the duty of remembrance."

After three years at the school, the prisoners have acquired a practical tool to help them reintegrate into society after completing their sentences. The program, in operation since 2001, was also implemented in the prisons of Arica and Concepción.

Based on the success of this initiative, another project is in the works: the establishment of a call center within a Santiago prison offering service to a range of companies. Under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice, a pilot group has been chosen, consisting of 15 prisoners with outstanding conduct who are nearing the end of their sentences.

Currently, more than 50% of convicted criminals in Chile complete their primary and secondary schooling while in prison. During the past six years, more than 1,000 have taken the qualifying test for university studies. More than 400 of them earned scores enabling them to apply for higher education, and approximately 40 are currently enrolled as university students.

Adrenaline on a grand scale

The turbulent waters of the Futaleufú – "Big River" in the Mapuche language – break the stillness of the surroundings. Few people know of the village of the same name, whose isolated location – in the Tenth Region, only ten kilometers from the Argentine border – acts as a true barrier against time. There, life unfolds at a pace that seems preserved from another century; there are no automatic banking machines or service stations, and Argentine *gauchos* ride tranquilly on horseback along its streets lined with colorful rose gardens.



The women of the village take their husbands' names, and when children reach the age of 12, they must leave to finish their schooling. But after the end of winter, which is usually quite harsh, distances seem to shorten and access to the area becomes easier. The summer season, from December to March, brings tourists from various parts of the world who are eager to answer the deafening call of the river.

The rapids of the "Futa" are among the world's most dangerous. With dizzying velocity, its waters change from an intense emerald green to a furious, churning white, where capsizing can be fatal. On the difficulty scale used by rafters and kayakers, several sections of the river are Class 5, the highest. The waves in these zones can reach three meters, amid enormous rocks and powerful currents that pull objects down to the river bottom or hurl them outward to the shore.

Approximately 3,000 tourists arrive each year to experience precisely this. And they pay for the risk and adrenaline in dollars: \$2,500 to challenge the river's force, a sensation which – as they assert – is unique.

PEOPLE OF CHILE

Legendary and mythical characters

A seductive siren, an ugly but charming dwarf, an unlucky bird, and even a ghost ship – these are some of the romantic stories and characters (real or imaginary?) that have persisted for centuries in Chileans' beliefs and traditions.

The tales are usually passed on in oral form, with the original version gradually becoming transformed over time.

In the north of the country, most of the legends and characters are related to mining and the desert. For example, **EL Alicanto** is a bird that is said to appear to miners, showing them a path to a vein of silver or gold. However, when they reach the spot where the treasure should be, the bird abandons them, and only a prayer to the Virgin of Punta Negra can help them find their way back.

In another story, a beautiful young woman named **Añañuca** refused to be conquered by any man, until a miner arrived in search of a lost treasure. One night, he dreamed that a magical creature revealed the location of the hoard, and he set off to find it. **Añañuca** waited for a long time for her miner to return, but he never did, and she died of grief. She was buried on a rainy day, and it is said that the valley burst forth with red and yellow flowers the next day. Today, these flowers, which can be seen when the desert blooms, carry her name.



The legends of central Chile are marked by life in the countryside. **Calchona** is considered by many people to be an ugly and malevolent woman who attacks men on horseback, or, taking the form of an animal, assails men who are disobedient and unfaithful. However, in another version, she is seen as a woman who transforms herself by night into a variety of harmless animals. Many people follow the custom of leaving her a plate of food.

The **Cuca Blanca** is a friendly bird who helps lost travelers find their way, while **El Chonchón** is a kind of vampire with a human head and enormous ears, which it uses as wings to fly. Its presence is betrayed by its ominous call of “tué-tué,” which announces that someone will soon die. The creature is said to circle the home of a sick person, struggling with his or her spirit; if it is victorious, it drinks the patient's blood.

Hidden among the peaks of the Andes is the **Laguna del Inca**, or Inca Lake. According to legend, the emerald color of its waters derive from the tragic love story of the Inca Illi Yupanqui and the beautiful princess Kora-llé. On the day of their wedding, by the shores of the lake, Kora-llé had to follow the tradition of descending the steep hillside, but she slipped and fell from the cliff. Illi Yupanqui ran in vain to rescue her. In his grief, the prince decided that Kora-llé deserved a unique tomb: the depths of the lake. From then on, the water took on an emerald color, the same as that of the princess's eyes.

In southern Chile, the ghost ship **Caleuche** sails the seas and channels, both

on the surface and in the depths, but never during the day. On calm nights it often appears within the fog, taking the form of a majestic, beautifully illuminated sailing ship. From afar, one can hear music and a great uproar, as if a lively celebration were being held on its deck.



But the land of myths *par excellence* is Chiloé. In the legends of that island, **El Trauco** is an ugly, dwarfed faun who bewitches and seduces women. **La Pincoya**, a siren with long blonde hair, emerges from the depths of the waters to dance on the sands or above the waves, revealingly clothed in a dress of seaweed. When she faces out to sea as she dances, it means that fish and shellfish will be abundant. But if she gazes in the direction of the beach, the catch will be meager. At times, fishermen can see her among the rocks, combing her long hair.



AGENDA

- ★ January 17-19: Fifth Summit of Ministers of Health, “International Forum on Common Access to Health Care Services.” Sheraton Hotel, Santiago.
- ★ January 26 and 27: Official visit of the Prime Minister of Spain, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. Santiago.
- ★ January 26: Official visit of the President-elect of Uruguay, Tabaré Vázquez. Santiago.
- ★ February 1: Presentation by Interior Minister José Miguel Insulza to the Permanent Council of the OAS. Washington.

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