

## Richard Schifter on the role of the State Department in the 1988 Chilean referendum

Toward the end it was largely a matter of our laying down standards for the December 1988 referendum and Pinochet thought that he was going to win anyway so he might as well go along without standards. And I would meet with the Chilean ambassador probably every two weeks in 1988 and just spell out standards. You've got to make sure that the registration places for voting would be open in the evening when people quit working so they could go there, or on weekends. Then we lay down certain rules, well, recommended certain rules about opening the media, first of all the press, later the electronic media. And they did what we suggested because, you see the idea was, the way the question was put to me was, under no circumstances will the United States recognize the validity of the referendum. So when the question was put to me that way I began to think of answers to it and started spelling them out and they paid attention to them and really followed through, assuming all along that the "yes" vote was going to win, but it didn't.